

Bleeding Out

By: panravenc

Kakashi is a girl, she really is; and she rages, bloody and hungry, and not unlike a hound. Trans!Kakashi. EDITING - 7/18.

Status: complete

Published: 2017-12-21

Updated: 2018-12-30

Words: 22918

Chapters: 18

Rated: Fiction T - Language: English - Genre: Friendship/Romance -
Characters: [Kakashi H., Obito U.] Naruto U., Minato N. - Reviews: 49 -
Favs: 162 - Follows: 104

Original source: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/12767475/1/Bleeding-Out>

Exported with the assistance of [FicHub.net](https://www.ficHub.net)

Bleeding Out

[Introduction](#)

[masks](#)

[the teacher](#)

[girls, girls, girls](#)

[team seven](#)

[burning bridges](#)

[rainy days](#)

[steps forward](#)

[where news are announced](#)

[where there's the fall](#)

[where ashes begin to dim](#)

[where there's no light](#)

[where lips are locked](#)

[where dark roots lurk](#)

[where the early bird catches the worm](#)

[where there's a way to happiness](#)

[where bliss takes over](#)

[where theirs is a family of choice](#)

[where the end takes place](#)

masks

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER I

Masks

Kakashi is four years old when, at the market, an old lady pinches her cheeks and says to her father:

"Oh, he looks so much like you, Sakumo," she pauses, stops pinching her cheeks, and continues. "He'll be such a handsome man once he grows up!"

It's not like Kakashi's world shatters at the words. It doesn't, and she goes on with her life by her father's side, trying to make him proud because he's one of the best, and she wants to do good by him.

(Because sometimes her father looks *so sad*, *so broken*, and she makes him smile, makes him forget.)

(Kakashi will keep her father smiling because her mom isn't here to do it anymore.)

But it stirs something in her she didn't know existed, and it leaves her uncomfortable. She's unsettled, and her bones *beg* for something she doesn't understand yet.

Her mind races and tries to pinpoint the problem, but she can't pick her bones and muscles apart like she does math, like she does

taijutsu, and her teeth bit the insides of her mouth until she bleeds in restless abandon.

(For the first time, Kakashi knows what blood tastes like.)

It continues for days, for weeks, for *months*, until one day she's sharpening her claws—her fingernails—against a rusty kunai and she cuts herself, and she stares and stares and stares; the gnawing subsides, the memories of girls playing in the park, one of them with a similar wound. The restlessness that's plagued her dwindles, appeased, satisfied, the image of the girl holding her tears back, bleeding, bleeding like Kakashi, and so, so —

Oh, Kakashi thinks. *Oh* .

The first time Kakashi says out loud that she's a girl, she's four. She knows what her blood tastes like, her nails are sharp, and one of them has dried blood on it. Her father's just come back, she's finished her training for the day, and by the routine, they're about to sit on the couch and talk about nonsensical things.

It's one of her favorite parts of the day.

"Dad?" She asks, a bit confused, but not unsure. He's drinking tea, and hums, low and calm and *father* , more like a rumble than an inquiry. "Can you buy me a mask? Like the ones you say Mom used to have?"

(So that people can't say she'll grow up a handsome man, so that people can't pinch her cheeks anymore.)

"Oh?" He's surprised. "Why would you want to wear a mask, Kakashi?" He asks.

She stays silent for a while, munching on a cookie—though not a sweet one because Kakashi hates sweets—and swallows, kind of nervous, but not, not really, because this is her father.

"Because I'm a girl." Kakashi looks at him, at the man who's only ever been kind and loving towards her, and smiles, softer than what Sakumo's used to.

For a moment, Sakumo panics. Because, because Kakashi is a girl—a *girl*—and that means he doesn't have a son, no, never *has*, that instead, he has a *daughter*. That Kakashi—little genius his baby is—has thought about this again and *again* until she was *sure*, until she could say to him the words he *knows* she's been trying to find for months, and it's confusing because *since when?*, but he doesn't say anything out loud, trying to process, trying not to react because his son—his *daughter*—needs him calm and rational right now.

Compartmentalize.

Calm down.

Breathe.

Kakashi is a girl. Not a boy, not a son, but a girl, a daughter.

It doesn't change anything. She's still *Kakashi*, which is what matters, still *his* for all that her pronouns switched.

Still the baby Katsumi died for, still the toddler he lives for, still the person he comes back for.

Still Kakashi.

"Okay," he says, exhaling, allowing all his love for Kakashi to slip through his eyes. "Do you want to change your name?"

Kakashi marvels at her father, can practically *feel* his love for her. She shakes her head. "No, Kakashi's fine. It's mine."

Her father nods and puts the tea down on the table. He stands up, grabs her by the sides, and hugs her. Holding her by his torso, she reaches up to his neck. His smell—blood and wolves and paper and earth, wrapped in warmth and contentment—reaches her nose and

she nuzzles him, unable not to. He does the same, smiling all the while.

"Come on, pup," she hears him say after a few minutes. "Time for a bath."

Sakumo wishes Katsumi were here. He wishes for her smiles and her warmth, for her acceptance, for her love, like he always does, but this time it's a bit different, because he wishes her for Kakashi. And although he's wished countless times for the three of them, this time, he thinks, *I wish you could be here, because I don't know what words to say and I never will, and you were always the one who understood and put them out in the open*. He thinks, *I wish you could do that now, could reassure our child, could make her laugh as you did me, because I remember your love but she doesn't; so please, please, please, come back, come back to me, come back to us*.

That night, Sakumo kisses his daughter on the forehead and sends her to bed with a smile.

He has a daughter.

They have a daughter—even if they didn't know at first. Not a son, but a daughter.

Are you seeing this, Katsumi?

The morning after, Kakashi sighs and stares in complete deadpan as her father asks many, many pointless questions; like *do you want to paint your room pink* and *would you like to wear a dress*, which is *embarrassing* because *why* would she want her room *pink*? And *why* would she want to wear a *dress*? They're terribly impractical for training, and every single one she's seen on the other girls makes her skin crawl at the thought of wearing them herself.

But he also starts calling her his daughter, starts using the correct pronouns, starts calling her *Kashi-chan*.

(Which, okay, not the best thing to happen in the household, but she can bear the nickname if it means her father accepts her as she is.)

Every time he does, she smiles a bit more.

Later, he buys her a mask.

Kakashi hugs him, for that.

the teacher

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER II

The Teacher

The second time she says out loud she's not a boy and that everybody's got it wrong, her father's already dead.

(It hurts. More than anything she's ever felt before, more than any injury she's had during missions, and the image of his blood on the floor won't leave her mind.)

(She hates him for it. Hates him, not because he prolonged the war and not because he chose his teammates above his mission, no, Kakashi's far more selfish than that: she hates him because he *left her* . Because he was her *father* and she was already bathed in blood, she was already a *chūnin* so why, *why* did he have to leave his blood on her hands, too?)

(But at the same time, *at the same time*, she still loves him. He's still her father, the one who accepted her, who *loved* her, who smelled like wolves and blood and paper, and she can't—)

(She can't hate him for it, for loving his comrades too much, but—)

(She just wants to know *why* .)

It happens when she's going back to Konoha from a mission with Minato-sensei, a C-rank, and he says:

"Let's stop by the hot springs," cheery and calm, two emotions he wears like she does her mask. "It'll be nice."

She nods. There are fluids on her clothes that don't belong to her and her body is tense after the battle with that group of bandits, and a bath sounds nice. It isn't until they're already on their way to the hot springs that she realizes they're divided by sex.

And. And Kakashi doesn't really care about how people perceive her gender, never has, because she knows she's a girl and that's all she needs, but.

But she's still a *girl* , and this is a public bathhouse, and, and—

And she doesn't *want* to go to the man's side. Because, because she's *not* , even if her body tells another story, even if her register says *male, shinobi*, instead of *female, kunoichi* .

She hesitates.

She—

Those few seconds of hesitation are all Minato needs to see that something's wrong, though. "Kakashi-kun?" He asks. "Everything alright?"

Kakashi wants to scream at him that *no* , no everything's not alright because she's a girl in a boy's body and *what is she supposed to do, now?* And she's so, so confused; it hurts to know she can't go to the woman's side, it's frustrating to know her teacher doesn't know what's happening to her, because *her father did* , it makes her *angry* that she wasn't born a girl and *wouldn't that make it all easier?*

But she doesn't. She doesn't because this is *Minato-sensei* , the only one who's been there since before her father's death, the one who had opened up his home to her when Kakashi couldn't sleep on her own, the one who had taken her in, and she's so, so grateful for it. Her instincts are screaming at her to trust him, to tell him, and he's

Minato-sensei, who smells like fresh grass and ink and sweet apples—and frogs, but ew—so she grabs his sleeve as she opens her mouth and in a small voice, she lets the words fall.

"I'm a girl."

It's not subtle. There's no way out of it, and she tries to hide a wince. She's said enough.

But Minato's confusion is plain on his face, so for him, she tries again.

"I wasn't—I'm not a boy, even when—even if—" she cuts herself, hands trembling, clutching *Minato-sensei's* sleeve. "I'm a girl," her voice cracks. *I'm sorry*, "I'm a girl and my body's wrong but I *am* and, and, *sensei*—" *I don't want you to hate me.*

Minato's been serving Konoha for seven years and one of them has been dedicated to teaching Kakashi how to survive this cruel world of theirs, but for all his genius, the words his brain is trying to process aren't there. *Kakashi is a girl*. A girl, instead of a boy, and he didn't *know*.

(Wouldn't have known if civilians got a word of it, because for all he loves Konoha he knows its habitants' flaws, and suddenly, he's glad Kakashi's a shinobi. Because the forces don't care about that, *can't*, when death is so near all the time, but civilians do.)

(Maybe Sakumo hadn't officially changed Kakashi's gender because he knew. Maybe Sakumo simply hadn't been told, or Kakashi hadn't figured it out before his suicide. But he doesn't care, because he's got Kakashi in front of him, and not Sakumo.)

Grabbing one of her small hands with his—still trembling, even as her body's still, such a good little shinobi she is—he rubs his thumb on it, the other automatically seeking the back of her head, bringing her closer to him.

It's the first hug Kakashi's ever had since her father's death.

Minato-sensei doesn't hate her. He still—loves—her. Relief floods through her, and she relaxes in his hold, bit by bit.

"Okay," he says, a little baffled, but hiding it well. "Okay. That's fine. Do you still go by Kakashi?" At her nod, he exhales. "Good."

He's silent for a few seconds, thinking, musing, and Kakashi wonders. "Sensei?"

"You're still a child, Kakashi," he points out, looking at her in the eyes. "So it's okay if you enter the man's side. You would even if you were born different, because you're six years old. Do you understand, Kakashi?"

Oh. *Oh*. She doesn't need to choose, not yet, that's what he's saying. She doesn't need to fight the side of her that rebels at the thought of entering the man's side because what matters is that Minato is her guardian and she would enter with him regardless of her gender.

"We can still leave. If you're truly uncomfortable, we can go back to the Inn and use our room's shower. I swear it won't bother me."

He's serious in his offer, Kakashi knows. And for that, for the option, for what he's made her realize—she's a child still, she doesn't have to choose, not now, not for a while—she looks up at him in adoration and with a blush in her cheeks he can't see, and shyly, she whispers:

"It's fine. As long as Minato-sensei doesn't hate me, it's fine."

Suddenly, Minato's struck with how much he loves this child. With how much he would give for her, to protect her, to guide her, and he wonders, briefly, if this is what it feels like to have a family.

Small as it is, he thinks he would love to find out.

Scooping her up to his hips, he smiles at the little squeak that escapes her lips, and he hugs her tighter. He laughs at her protests, and almost *melts* when she gives up and mumbles in his neck something he can't make out, hugging him back.

(When they finally enter the hot springs, Kakashi's using a towel to cover her face. But Minato has seen it, and he finally understands her urge to wear a mask—because while her face is that of a child, it's still boyish, and a little too alike to Sakumo's.)

(Later, he muses, and thinks, not for the first time: *how could you ever let go of Kakashi, Sakumo?*)

girls, girls, girls

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER III

Girls, Girls, Girls

"How did you know?"

The question isn't made with malice. It isn't made with the intention to invalidate Kakashi, which she appreciates, but it's also—private. Uncomfortably close to letting her feelings loose. To opening up.

And even if—even if this is *Kushina-nee-san*, it's not something she wants to talk about. She isn't ashamed, or anything like that, but she's also eight years old, and she just *knows*. Knows that she isn't a boy, that she's never been, that it feels *wrong* when people mistake her for one.

Knows that she's been bleeding since she was four years old, and that she's never figured out how to make it stop.

Kushina's known she's a girl for about two weeks, now, and this is just her being curious. Kushina is a lot of things—scary, terrifying, irremediably herself—but she's not someone who would hurt her comrades on purpose. Of that, Kakashi is quite sure.

(No one's cleaned her wounds as gently as Kushina, for all that the redhead makes a show of being angry about it. No one's scolded her for them before, either, and it's *stupid* because she's a shinobi—she's going to get hurt. But. But it makes her feel warm, and happy,

and it makes her want to smile so wide it hurts her cheeks, and she wants to hate it but she *can't* .)

(Minato and Kushina are two names etched in her heart and she wishes she could rip them out and don't care anymore because—because *father*, that's why—but it makes her so, so happy that she can't.)

"I was—bleeding," she tries to explain, because she doesn't owe it to anyone but Kushina-nee-san is *hers* the same way Minato-sensei is, and she *wants to* . "And so was another girl. And—I thought, *I bleed like her* . And it clicked. That—I wasn't..." *a boy*, she doesn't say, letting the words linger.

Kushina hums, and Kakashi flinches when a hand passes through her hair.

"Would you like it if I called you Kashi-chan instead?"

It shouldn't—it shouldn't make her veins feel like ice. It's just—a question. Just a nickname. Just a more feminine way to say her name. Her heart shouldn't feel like seizing. Like stopping. But. *But*.

("Come on, Kashi-chan, don't leave your old man waiting!")

It's not fair. She doesn't—she *hates* him. She shouldn't—choking and tearing up shouldn't be her first responses to *that* . He doesn't have the *right* —

"Yeah," and it comes out as a choked up word, one she can't make herself go past her throat, but it escapes through her teeth anyways.

She's frozen up, but Kushina-nee-san's hands are steady in her scalp and—she—doesn't— *fuck* .

Why do I have to love you? , she despairs.

(*Why do you have to love me?*)

Hate is easier than love. Kakashi's hated her father for long enough to know. But Kushina-nee-san's love is warm and blazing and *home* , just like Minato-sensei's, overwhelmingly vast, and it rips Kakashi from the insides and forces her to love them back.

"Just—when we're alone," she clarifies. Because she's still the *Son of the White Fang* to Konoha and she'll probably always be. She doesn't care, because she *doesn't care* about what civilians have to say about her, or—or about her father.

She *doesn't* .

"Okay," Kushina accepts it, just as easily as she'd done when Minato first told her *Kakashi's ready to tell you something*, and the child in front of her had followed with *I'm a girl* , fake nonchalance in her stance.

(Kushina'd felt her heart melt.)

("Good-ttebane," she'd answered. "Men are all pansies, anyways.")

From then on, Kakashi finds that Kushina-nee-san is just as bad as her father was.

She buys her skirts.

("A girl should have at least *one* in her wardrobe, and that's *final-ttebane* . ")

(Kakashi can't say she understands why when all she wears is either her training gear, her mission uniform, or—or her father's old comfy clothes to sleep, but she's not going to go against *Kushina-nee-san* anytime soon, so. Skirts in her wardrobe.)

Kakashi doesn't dislike skirts in particular. Some of them are cute, some others are not. That's fine, but she doesn't have time for them. She's a shinobi, she's got to train.

Skirts and dresses feel *open* in a way pants and old shirts don't, and it leaves her feeling vulnerable.

She's not—she's not ready for that.

She's not sure she ever will.

(Kushina-nee-san insists, at the beginning, that she can wear shorts under them. That it's not like she has to flaunt her underwear for everyone to see. That she can hide knives in there, better than with pants, that everyone underestimates those wearing skirts.)

(But Kakashi hides her gender from the world, doesn't let it hurt when others mistake her for a guy. Kakashi's not a kunoichi and she didn't take those useless classes at the Academy because of it, and she's—grateful. That beyond being a weapon for her village, there's something of *hers* that Konoha doesn't own.)

(She doesn't say any of that. She won't. She *can't* .)

But skirts are not what makes a girl, pink walls and dresses and dolls are not what makes a girl. Kakashi's been a girl all her life without them.

So she doesn't wear the skirts Kushina-nee-san buys her, just like she never wanted her walls *pink* when her father suggested it, just like she's never wanted to play with dolls.

She bleeds, instead: all broken bones and muscle pains and exhaustion, a body just like any other. Because despite their differences shinobi and kunoichi bleed all the same, and Kakashi is, and will always be, bloody from head to toes.

(Kushina'd said, a sad, almost bitter smile on her face: "You won't have it any easier than a kunoichi, but you won't have it worse, either. Being a girl means people think your violence will always be lesser than that of a man. That's why, when it comes to it, women

are more resilient." She'd looked at her in the eyes, serious and protective. "You'll know it, too, one day."

"What?" she'd asked.

And Kushina had grinned, wide and *feral*, a whirlpool contained in her veins. "What we are made of.")

team seven

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER IV

Team Seven

Kakashi's short of nine years old when Minato-sensei tells her they're going to have a permanent team.

It's been four years since she graduated, three since she made chūnin, and she's had her fair of temporary teammates—both those that think she's just a kid and thus, shouldn't be allowed to lead them on missions and those that think her shadow is that of her father's and that she should carry a legacy of shame which, *no thank you* — but she's never had *permanent* ones.

Your class graduated, he says, we're going to have two of them with us from now on.

By the time Kakashi hit seven years old, she stopped caring about how her temporary teammates perceived her. Because—to them, to the world outside of Minato-sensei's home—she's a boy. And that means *men's bathrooms* and jokes on *no peeking on the girls*, and it sent sharp pains across her chest the first few times but not anymore.

They don't have to know, either way. It's better if they don't.

(She doesn't like going to the bathroom at all.)

But *permanent* ones are—different. They have an implication behind that means *trust* and *loyalty* and *pack* and Minato-sensei and Kushina-nee-san are those but it's still terrifying to think she can have *more* .

(She trembles when she thinks about it. In fear or in excitement she doesn't know, but it's there nonetheless.)

The day arrives when the two who just graduated have to join them, and Kakashi wants to despair because *those are genin, sensei*, but Minato just laughs it off and tells her he's sure they'll get along.

How?, she wants to ask, *when they don't know a thing about what lays outside the walls?*

"Now that we're all here," starts Minato-sensei, calm as always.
"How about we introduce ourselves? Nohara Rin, right? Why don't you start?"

And Rin blushes a lot, but her smile is kind, and she's a *biological girl* and Kakashi—

Kakashi wants to hate her for it.

Because Kakashi's a feral thing, bruised and bloodied and remnants of a wolf's ashes before anything else; a girl whose body is so wrong it feels like it should glitch sometimes, who has the smell of iron beneath her fingernails and the screams of her village's enemies echoing in her mind, and it isn't—it isn't *fair* .

Rin wants to study medical ninjutsu. She likes cats. Dislikes spicy meals and liars. Aspires to be the best medic-nin in the future.

Kakashi's never thought about healing. She likes dogs. Spicy meals are okay, and she's been a liar since before she was four. In the future, she just wants to do her job well and make Minato-sensei proud of her.

(Proud the way her father had once been.)

She wants to hate her. *So, so much* . But—she's met kunoichi before. It's fine. Rin's naive but she'll get over it. And it's not like Kakashi can wish her innocence back.

Kakashi won't hate Rin.

Obito, on the other hand.

It's just—the boy is *loud* . Loud, and an idiot, and so contrary to what being a shinobi means that it's *laughable* .

He's got a smile on his face the whole time—except when she talks, for some reason—and he shouts the entire time he's introducing himself. Apparently, he likes mochi, playing with Rin, and helping his grandmother with the groceries, dislikes arrogant kids, and wants to be the next Hokage.

Kakashi snorts.

Okay, it's not like she wanted to mock him on purpose, but—it's difficult, to imagine *Uchiha Obito* as the Hokage when she knows Minato-sensei's on the running. Because Obito says it like it's easy, but he doesn't even have blood in him. Doesn't know what it *takes* to be able to lose your naivety in purpose.

Kakashi knows, Minato-sensei knows, Kushina-nee-san knows.

Rin and Obito don't.

When it's her turn, she stares at them in deadpan, and sighs. "My name is Hatake Kakashi. There's nothing else you need to know."

"Wha—bastard! At least you could tell us something!" Obito shouts.

Kakashi raises an eyebrow. "I did."

The boy scowls, and Minato-sensei chuckles at her attitude, but it's not like Kakashi can help it.

Rin is too kind, and Obito is too innocent, and Kakashi—she wants to protect that, she realizes. Wants them to turn away from being a shinobi and live a life where they can retain those qualities and keep being children for a little more.

But they chose it. And Kakashi, perhaps more than anyone, knows it's impossible to take away choices from people.

In the end, they pass the test Minato-sensei designed for them. The Bell Test, he called it, smiling in that way Kakashi's learned to fear—and been good to do so because *fuck* . That was sometest, alright.

From then on it's training, and *D-rank* missions—which are a *nightmare*, Kakashi thought she'd left them behind, *why* —and more training, and months pass that way.

And then it's Kakashi's heart, beating faster when he smiles.

And then it's Kakashi's cheeks, blushing when he talks.

And then it's *Kakashi*, wanting more of *Obito*, even though he's irritating and dumb and an *idiot* , and is always late, and there's *not one good reason* why the fuck is this happening.

Obito is *good* in a way Kakashi can't be, in the way *Rin* is, and maybe that's why he prefers her. Maybe that's why he likes her better, why he blushes when she's near, why his heart races when he's with her.

Kakashi is not Rin. She can't ever be.

She wants to hate her for it.

She wants to hate *him* for it.

(She's jealous. By the gods, she's *jealous* .)

Kakashi only has Obito's attention when he insults her, when he tries to best her, when he *fights* her. And fighting—fighting's been Kakashi's *life* since before she could walk, and she's learned to love the chase and the hunt, she's learned to love how her bones sing and how her mind snaps, ready to take action, thousands of possibilities on how to take down the enemy racing through.

Kakashi *loves* fighting, the adrenaline, the sheer ferocity of it: she belongs, then, her mind and body as one—without disruption, without glitching, because her all is a weapon and there's no need for dysphoria when you're not even *human* .

And Obito—Obito loves *fighting* her.

(Maybe that's what makes it impossible to shut down the involuntary smiles and the speeding of her heart when it comes to him.)

So Kakashi doesn't back down. She goads him, insults him back, provokes him and riles him up until he's red on the face and ready to strike. Obito's focus is her, those moments, never straying to Rin or cats or old ladies who need help with the groceries, and—

And that's good enough for her. She doesn't care if it's childish, she already knows. But. But it's not like anyone has to know about it.

But of course, Minato-sensei notices it.

He questions her when they're in his home, with Kushina-nee-san away for the evening, and it's—it's an *ambush*, that's what it is.

Minato-sensei is fucking unfair.

"Kashi-chan," he calls her, the tone in his voice deceptively *casual* like he's not about to annihilate Kakashi's defenses in one question. "Do you, perhaps, have a crush on Obito-kun?"

And—um. What, what do you say to *that*?

Kakashi's face *explodes* in red, embarrassed and with shame in her gut because—because she's supposed to be a shinobi and not show her emotions but Obito makes it easy to forget, to forget she's *wrong* in ways she shouldn't be and broken in ways he isn't yet.

Minato sighs. That was enough of an answer. For a second, he despairs: his team is the definition of a *love triangle*, for god's sake.

(He is not sure he likes Kakashi having a crush, either. Even if it's Obito.)

(He just hopes he doesn't have to give her *the talk* . His with Jiraiya was *painful* . He's traumatized. For *life* . Maybe Kushina will do it? Yes, that sounds like a plan.)

(For now, though, Minato-sensei will enjoy teasing his student. She's just—she's so *cute* when she stutters and attempts to deny his accusations, it's so *fun* .)

("No, Kushina, I'm not a sadist, what do you *mean* —")

burning bridges

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER V

Burning Bridges

Kakashi's twelve years old, training hard for her jōnin exams, and her— *feelings* for her teammate have not gone away as she so hoped.

Because they fight.

Because they *don't*, more often than not; because they bicker, scratch, grin at each other in that feral way Kakashi *loves*, all fangs and claws and blood, and it's the adrenaline coursing through her veins and it's the way he offers the peace sign afterwards, a pout in his lips because he's lost.

Because Obito's getting better, at *everything* , because he's making efforts in their training and taking their missions seriously; because Obito's no longer innocent and he *understands* a bit more, now, even if he's still quite naive.

(Because he's fourteen and he *doesn't fucking stop smiling*, because he's fourteen and he still insists on bathing together in attempts to see her face, because he's fourteen and *terribly cute* and this *should not be still happening to her, what the fuck* —)

(Because Obito and Kakashi still fight, still get mean, still are assholes to each other, but. But they're teammates, if that counts for

something.)

(They're more than they were, and that's enough for her.)

He's a chūnin, now, him and Rin, and although their promotion is recent, Kakashi knows they're at a mid-chūnin level at the very least. They're good—not geniuses, but hard-working, and that *counts* : Rin is a fast learner, her medic-nin techniques coming together quickly, and Obito's turning out to be quite the tank, even if he still has a long way to go.

They're strong, for their age.

(They wouldn't survive Minato-sensei otherwise.)

(They wouldn't survive *her* , otherwise.)

She's—kind of proud, she thinks, when she watches them spar.

Three weeks later she's a jōnin, the youngest they've ever had.

On the morning of her first mission after the test, Obito doesn't give her anything as a present.

(It stings that he doesn't arrive on time, that he blushes when Rin smiles at him, that he glares at her when her remarks at his absent present are meaner than usual, but it's fine.)

(Even if she would have killed for a present from Obito.)

Minato gives her one of his special kunai, those with his chakra infused in, and Rin gives her a personal medic kit. They're useful for the mission, thoughtful, and Kakashi feels warm.

Five minutes later, when Obito barely lets out a small *congratulations* , she hides a smile.

Her first mission as a jōnin is to destroy the Kannabi Bridge.

(She won't admit she's nervous, but she has a feeling Minato-sensei knows.)

(Minato-sensei *always* knows.)

When they encounter their first enemy, Kakashi kills the Iwa-nin with her *chidori* . It's not a clean kill, not by a mile, but it gets the job done.

It gets messy, too, messier than usual: blood is on her clothes, on the ground, on the trees, on her *hands*. Kakashi's killed far too many to be fazed, and Minato-sensei scolds her for being reckless, but either she's more nervous than she realized or there's something truly wrong with this mission.

(Because her instincts are never wrong, *Hatake's never are*, and right now they're all in danger. They're *pack* , even if she refuses to acknowledge it sometimes—because *father*, that's why—and she *refuses* to lose them.)

(Not again.)

The rest of the day passes by without any other inconvenience. A miracle in and of itself, she's sure, but she'll take what she can.

That same night, Obito and Minato-sensei talk. She doesn't mean to overhear, not really, would've been asleep if she could—knows the dangers of insomnia during missions, of not resting properly, has had to learn them by trial and error—but she's anxious, on edge because of her instincts, and she—

She's curious, once her name gets thrown into the conversation.

(She's nervous, too.)

"Kakashi's an awesome guy," Obito says after making sure he's established and whined about how much of a prick she is, and, ridiculously—it makes her heart beat faster. It's the first time he's

praised her, she knows, and she decides to ignore how happy that makes her.

And then—

Then —

The White Fang's son, Minato-sensei says.

It—

It isn't *fair*, how one mention of him can destroy her like this. Can make her feel like hundreds of needles are stabbing and sowing her heart apart, can make her blood turn to ice and her throat constrict in itself. Can make her want to throw up, can make her want to curl up and *hide*, even if she does nothing of it.

Fuck you, she thinks, has thought more than once, longing, angry, frustrated, *heartbroken*.

She doesn't want Obito to know.

About her father, about how he—how he *killed himself*, about how he looked at her and couldn't see she still *needed him* .

And, if that wasn't enough, Minato-sensei—

"Obito... Try to understand her, even if it's just a little. Kakashi means well."

No .

Obito *can't* know.

(He does.)

Why? Minato-sensei's never done that before. He's careful with his words, he would never —

Maybe he's tired, just like her.

Maybe he's rattled by this mission, just like she is, and didn't realize what he was saying.

Maybe, maybe—

"He's still an asshole, you know. It's not my fault the bastard's communication skills are *on the floor* , Minato-sensei!"

She thanks the gods Obito's *an idiot*, and more focused on her apparent assholery than on the slip of Minato-sensei's tongue, because—

Because she doesn't want him to know. Not when he's in love with Rin, not when it changes *nothing* . Not when it doesn't matter if she's a girl or not, because she's selfish and she knows Obito, knows he would get awkward and wouldn't fight her and wouldn't—wouldn't *change* his feelings towards Rin.

Not when Obito would get unsure of how to act around her, would back off, would *ignore her* .

Because, if only to fight and bicker and bruise, Obito's attention is sorely focused on her, and she wants to keep it that way.

Sleep doesn't come any easier, after that. But she's tired enough, and at least she doesn't see her father when she closes her eyes.

The morning after, when Minato-sensei is not there anymore, she breathes.

In, out, in, out.

She runs.

Obito and Rin follow her. Just a few steps behind, sometimes side by side.

The dread in her gut increases.

(And then it happens.)

It's an *ambush*, and in the end, they manage to capture Rin.

It's frustrating, and her heart drops to the ground. Kakashi knows the decision falls on her; the mission is too important to fail—it could end the war. *It could end the war.*

It could end the war.

But Obito wants to go after Rin. He wants to rescue her— *of course*, he does—and she begs for her words to come out, for her cords to function and say *no*.

But Obito— *goddamn Obito, who she's ready to kill for, to die for, who she wants nothing more than to see happy* —looks at her. With hope, with *faith*, that Kakashi will go along with him, will abandon the mission just like her father did and go blind into the enemy's territory on the chance they still haven't killed their teammate.

It's irrational. She shouldn't. *This mission could end the war*, she wants to shout.

She needs to destroy the Kannabi Bridge.

But Obito wants her to rescue Rin.

Jealousy surges inside of her for a moment— *would you do the same for me?*, a traitorous part of her brain wants to ask—and there's a sting in her heart, but.

It should be harder than it is to say yes to him.

(Because Kakashi's a shinobi, and it's her duty to complete the mission.)

(But, *but* —)

("*First and foremost*," she remembers Minato-sensei saying, strangely sombre. "*We are human, Kakashi.*")

"Okay."

The words fall from her lips like they were always meant to, and it breaks Kakashi's heart in two, in three, in a million pieces; maybe she's more like her father than she thought.

(But no, because her father *abandoned her* , and right now she's doing the exact opposite. And, somehow, that reassures her more than any relief Obito's face wears.)

(She hates how she wants him to look at her, to want to disobey the world for her, the same way he does with Rin. She hates how he's enough to make her irremediably warm, excited and nervous at the same time.)

(She hates how Rin is the one that makes him feel those things.)

(Feeling for Obito *hurts* , but she can't help it. Not really.)

(In a tender, scalding way she's not sure she hates, Obito is now part of her heart.)

Going after Rin is both her sides fighting, nature vs nurture— *pack* vs *village*. Going after Rin is a blinding grin from Obito and her hands trembling. Going after Rin is a few more Iwa-nin in her body count, is losing her right eye trying to protect Obito from an attack, is adjusting to a narrow vision of the field in seconds.

Going after Rin is making Obito cry for her lost eye, is watching him protect her for a change while she's still down, is him awakening the *sharingan* and her using Rin's medical kit to stop the bleeding in her eye.

When they arrive at the cave they're holding Rin hostage, Obito runs straight to her. No matter the enemies—maybe trusting her to watch

his back, maybe just *not caring* —he just runs towards her, like Rin's the one who holds his gravity, his centre, like he's been drowning and she's the air he needs.

And if Kakashi's kills are a bit more vicious, no one can say anything about it—no one has to know, either way.

Making sure no one's been left alive, they make their way out of the cave.

And then the dread she's thought jealousy before appears, and another ambush waits for them.

Rin's exhausted. She's been tortured, most likely through *genjutsu* . Obito's been wasting his chakra with his newly awakened *sharingan* , the idiot. And Kakashi—

Kakashi's bled, has used more *chidori* than she can count, and her brain is an inch away from turning feral.

Not ideal, in any way, *at all* .

But they fight, they manage.

At least, until some Iwa-nin is going to stab Obito from behind.

And Kakashi's tired. She's *tired*, feral, running on instincts and losing blood at an alarming rate, halfway through a mental breakdown over the goddamn *feelings* Obito makes her feel, and in the end, it's easier than it should have to make the decision.

And in an instant, she steps aside from her battle and makes her peace knowing that losing her life to save *him* , to save Obito, is worth it.

The enemy nin's kunai stabs her through the ribs, and it sends a sharp pain across her body. Her vision blurs, and she hears from afar the cries of her teammates, her name in a pained song.

A flash of yellow is the last thing she sees.

At least, she thinks, I'll die as bloody as I've always been.

(Then, it's all black.)

She wakes up in a hospital, *Konoha's* hospital—the scent is the same, the sunlight that is *home* —and confused as she is, because she's pretty sure she died, she can't stop the blush nor the racing heart when the first thing she sees is Obito.

He's sleeping, head in her hospital bed, holding her hand like she's going to disappear the moment he lets go.

Kakashi's sore, hurt, confused and can't remember what happened to put her in the hospital, but she melts all the same, wanting nothing more than to make the scene last forever.

Tired, she yawns and closes her eyes.

Sleep comes far more easily when Obito's holding her hand, she notices, before oblivion reclaims her once more.

(She wakes up with Obito holding her hand tighter than before and looking at her with despair in his eyes.)

(He fucking *cries* .)

(She does, too.)

rainy days

BLEEDING OUT

© 2021; panravenc.

CHAPTER VI

Rainy Days

The war doesn't end with the Kannabi Bridge being destroyed, but it does give Konoha an advantage, Kakashi learns later.

(They tell her it was Minato-sensei, who managed to finish the mission, as Rin and Obito got her to safety. *Good* .)

And so, the war goes on.

And so, Kakashi kills, kills, and kills again.

(The predator her slim figure hides curls up in satisfaction and, bathed in blood, smiles, all teeth and no kindness left.)

(Hatake's are *wolves* , she's learnt, domesticated they might be.)

(Even if she's the only one left, her bones still sing when the hunt begins.)

Obito does, too. Sometimes it kills her, to see him so disturbed after a particularly difficult mission.

But they're all alive. Months of war, of conflict, of uncertainty are upon them, but—

But they're all *alive* .

And Kakashi—who knows the weight of being left behind—is grateful.

Grateful for the days she gets to spend by her pack's side, bickering with Obito and listening to Rin's rants about medicine, sparring against Minato-sensei and eating Kushina-nee-san's food. Grateful for the long, hot days spent training by their side; for the missions where she knows they have her back; for the fights and the arguments and the jokes and everything that comes in between.

She could do without her hormones, though.

She's thirteen already. She *gets it* , her body is ready for the next stage, *whatever* .

It's—

It's *distracting* .

Or, well. *Obito* is.

Which is a problem in itself, because Kakashi figured her crush would have gone away by now, but.

Obviously not.

Before, she only wanted his attention. His smiles. His compliments, maybe.

Now, now it's— *unacceptable*, that's what it is.

Because now she *wants him* . In a way she's never wanted anyone before.

And it's—

It's *embarrassing* . Especially when Minato-sensei gives her those *knowing* looks every time she has to share a tent with Obito, or when they bathe together in missions, or when she gets distracted during training because, apparently, now that he's fifteen Obito's decided to forgo shirts on training grounds.

Don't ask her. *Please* .

Her heart doesn't stop beating faster each time she sees him, and every time there's sweat dripping down his torso her face becomes a furnace. She's sure that without her mask, her teammates would have discovered her crush by now.

But she does have some grip on her emotions, thankfully, so they don't. Minato-sensei *doesn't* count. Obviously.

It's when they're training, on a rare cloudy day, that Obito comes bearing news. As soon as they rest, he speaks out loud.

"I have to attend a funeral."

No one likes attending funerals—Kakashi the least of all.

(Her father never got one, after all. Wasn't *worthy* enough.)

(She's never seen anyone by his—spurned, ignored, isolated—grave.)

(None other than her.)

"It's—an Uchiha died on a recent mission, but they couldn't recover her body," Obito continues, shadows in his eyes, insistent. "I—didn't know her personally, but," he pauses, twirling a kunai with his fingers, a nervous tick he picked up from Minato-sensei. "Grandma did, so. She asked me to go in her stead."

(Obito's grandmother, his sole guardian, is bedridden. Kakashi knows how it feels, to watch someone close to you lose their grip on life, and so she doesn't say anything on those days Obito comes to

her, silent and closed off, seeking the kind of understanding she can give.)

(She knows there are other times where he goes to Rin. Because Rin can offer something more than just understanding, than just silence—she can offer sympathy and comforting words, a hug and a smile where Kakashi can only offer her shoulder, her strength when he lowers his guard.)

"When is it?" Rin asks, fully intending to accompany him.

Kakashi doesn't want to go to a funeral ever again—she knows better than to offer.

"In three days," comes his answer; a sigh, a twirl of the kunai. "It's a clan obligation—apparently."

As always, when talking about the Uchiha as a whole, his voice turns neutral. He confided in her, some time ago, that he doesn't know what to think about them: about how they changed their tune once he got the *sharingan*, about how they still whisper behind his back, about how their smiles reek of lies—as if he wasn't *shinobi* enough not to know, not to *notice*.

He would've gone even if it wasn't, obviously, since it's his grandmother who asked, but—

"As if those stuck-ups want me there, anyway."

Yeah.

Kakashi understands.

(Half the village still can't stand her—her and her surname, her and her silver hair, her and everything that reminds them of her father.)

Three days later, in the afternoon, she meets up with Rin and Obito to train. Minato-sensei is still on another mission, and soon they'll be

on another—the two-week imposed rest after three months on the front ends in a couple of days.

"How did it go?" She asks, sweaty and trying not to let her eyes stray towards Obito's torso—a losing battle if there was ever one.

Rin is patching Obito up, and she smiles at her, one tainted with sadness. Obito sighs, but she doesn't retract her question. It's been easier, lately, to just—relax, around her teammates. Ever since the Kannabi Bridge.

And now—they're *friends*.

Before, their ties to her were distant.

Now, the distance closes every day.

She doesn't know how to feel about it—she's glad, she's *terrified* .

She's starting to love them. Beyond her—completely unwilling—crush on Obito, beyond the duty of being a team. They're starting to become *hers*, the way Sakumo was, the way Minato-sensei and Kushina-nee-san are.

It's *terrifying* .

(She couldn't be happier about it.)

Obito looks up at the sky. "Her name was Uchiha Kiyomi. Mikoto-sama was crying—they were sisters. They said some bullshit about her duty towards Konoha and the Uchiha, about how much *they would miss her* ," it's not mocking, his tone. Just—resigned and sad and resentful and all of those emotions he doesn't like to linger on. "I don't know."

Later, it rains.

(It reminds her of the days she spent at her father's grave, uncaring of the cold as the fear of being alone settled in.)

Months after, when Rin's out on a mission as another team's medic-nin, she sees Obito crying as she has never seen him do.

He's on her doorstep, empty eyes, and he reeks of sadness, of desperation and hollowness.

She can't stand it.

She opens the door enough to let him enter, and doesn't protest when he grabs her by her father's old shirt, strong enough to leave bruises behind. And when she hugs him back, the door already closed, in the safety of her home, Obito—

— *breaks*.

His grip is unyielding, even if trembling, as he crumbles in her arms.

His tears begin to flow, and he *screams* , shattering and rupturing; his heart breaking, falling apart at the seams.

There's a part of her that screams, demanding she fixes it, fixes whatever made Obito *cry* like this, but she can't: she doesn't even know what's happened to break his spirit, usually the most resilient of them all.

His knees buckle, giving up, taking Kakashi with him to the ground. The position is uncomfortable, but she doesn't care.

He cries for a long time, in her arms.

"It hurts," he whispers, his voice utterly wrecked, between gasps and sobs. "It hurts *so much*. "

She doesn't say anything—Rin's the one who can weave words like a weapon, like a shelter, not her—but her embrace tightens.

"Obito, what—" she tries to say, not knowing how to ask, not knowing how to *act*.

He understands either way, just as he's always done when it comes to her.

"Grandma," his voice *breaks*, and she can barely hear it, even with her enhanced senses. "Grandma's *dead*. "

And—oh.

Yeah. She *does* know how much it hurts. How much it destroys, the grief and the loneliness. How much it *takes* .

She attempts to cover him with her body, even if he is bigger—bulkier, than her.

Obito's cries make her heart hurt, make her remember; Sakumo, and his body in the living room, and the *blood* , and the denial and the hurt and the reality, crashing down on her as she took his pulse and found *nothing* .

Her hands grip him in return, and she lets him use her as a shield against the rest of the world as he lets his guard down to its lowest, trusting her to keep him safe—trusting her with his vulnerability.

They stay that way for a long time. Her legs fall asleep. Her arms, too.

She doesn't care.

Will never care, if it's Obito.

He falls asleep, after a while. With tears still flowing down, but he does. And Kakashi—what else can she do, really. So she lifts him up and lays him down on her bed, finishes eating the dinner she'd prepared, and curls up around him, washing the remaining tears away with her thumb.

In the dark of the night, raindrops murmur against her window.

It's strangely fitting, for the sky to mourn alongside Obito.

The morning after, he will talk to her—but no, not really—and he will tell her all the stories he can remember about his grandmother, who was kind and scary and always left sweets for him on the counter, who loved him even though the rest of the clan didn't, who stayed up until late to tell him stories, who listened and comforted him the first time he had to kill and the first time he lost a teammate on a mission and—

And he will break down again, and Kakashi will hold him close again, and her heart will ache for him and her skin will break from how strong his grip is, and she will bleed like her heart did when her father died, like his heart is doing now and will continue to do so for a long time.

Kakashi understands grief. But hers was cold, desperate, *sudden* and, most of all, *angry*. Hers rages, in an attempt to protect herself; it leaves her *alone*, and grief like hers is an open wound she's not sure she can ever let heal.

Obito's grief is different, softer and cathartic, with a build-up of months of illness and degradation, and devastating all the same.

(It's when he's breaking in her arms that she *understands* , just how deep she's in when it comes to her teammates.)

(How much she loves them already.)

(How much she loves *him*.)

(It's terrifying. But with Obito in her arms, she can't bring herself to regret it.)

(Their names are already sewed on her heart. Kakashi already knows there's no going back.)

steps forward

BLEEDING OUT

© 2022; panravenc.

CHAPTER VII

Steps Forward

She tells them at fourteen. They're her best friends, her teammates, *hers* in the way Hatake claim, and it's started to rub her the wrong way when they keep referring to her as a boy. It claws, gnaws at her; her fingers bleed from the force her teeth bite onto them, her nails leave behind enough mark on her arms that days later she's still seeing bruises on the mirror.

It happens one day while on the training grounds, a couple of months after the Third War is over. She's just staring at them, and they're talking about whether *he* would beat some Jōnin in a race or not. Her heart jumps and scratches at her mind, insistent: *tell them, tell them, tell them*.

Maybe it's time.

Minato-sensei and Kushina-nee-san accepted her, didn't they?

(Her father did, the first of them all. She hates him, hates how much she treasures the memories by his side, loves him so much it tores her heart open and it makes her lungs rot.)

(She loves him, and hates him, and wants to kill him herself and wants to hug him and cry in his lap like she used to do when she was nothing but a pup.)

(She doesn't know anymore.)

They're on a pause, drinking water under a shade, a light breeze alleviating the heat of the summer. Kakashi's got bruises from the spar she's just won—though she won't admit to being impressed with how close Obito'd been a couple of times to landing her on the ground—and blood on her mouth from a kick that nearly knocked a tooth out. Biting her tongue, her muscles coil as her heartbeats resonate in her ears, and she thinks: *it's now or never* .

Obito and Rin are making light conversation, still not used to the peace the end of the war has brought.

(Not that she is, either.)

She thinks back on how they were: their innocence a pure white, their smiles still a mile wide.

It's cruel, and she definitely hates herself just a tad more for it, but she prefers them as they are now: hardened muscles under mesh shirts, scars littering their skin, toughened up but not yet beaten, with hands tainted red and their hearts a bit more closed off.

(It means they give parts of themselves to her that they don't give to other people; and Kakashi, *Hatake* , selfish as she is, as they can be, purrs in satisfaction at it.)

"Hey," she says, grabbing their attention. Both of them turn to her fast, curiosity shining through their eyes. Someday, she won't want to squash the affection that rises up to her chest, she knows.

"There's—" a false start, *great*. "There's something I've been meaning to tell you. For a while."

Fuck, she's so awkward.

(Socially competent, thy name is not Kakashi.)

"Sure," Rin responds, a grin as brilliant as the sun behind her. "What is it?"

And, the thing is: Rin would never judge someone for their gender issues, and Obito's grown a bit out of his *all-girls-are-flowers* ideology, but she still fears their reactions as if they're going to be raining hellfire upon her the moment they find out. Like they're going to think she's been deceiving them all this time, or something.

Obito frowns. "Come on, don't let us hanging!"

Ah, fuck it. "I'm." With one hand, she grabs a lock of hair out of her fringe, and fidgets with it. With the other, she makes a fist and grips her pants, trying to relieve the tension. "Not a boy."

"Eh?"

Yeah.

She shrugs, trying not to let her shoulders tense more than they already are. "I'm a girl. Except, you know. I haven't got the bits."

"Eh? Is that even possible?"

Obito is too predictable. "Shut up. It's not that difficult."

"Wha—excuse me for not knowing! Not everyone can be a genius—"

Unsurprisingly, Rin comes to the rescue. "Obito, don't be rude. Thanks for telling us, Kakashi," and then, she flounders. "Is it still Kakashi?"

Gods, she loves her.

"It is," she answers, her voice as indifferent as she can make it. Her heart flutters at her acceptance, and she tightens her fist, nails digging into skin. As jealous as she still is of her sometimes, Kakashi's found herself calling Rin a friend.

She doesn't regret it.

"Most people don't know—"

"Wait, wait, wait," Obito interrupts, because *of course* he does.

"You're a girl?"

Why, she wonders on times like this, *why is it you I fell in love with?*

"I am," nonchalant as she can be, truly.

He gives her a once over, masculine as she is, short hair and broad shoulders and not a hint of pink anywhere, not ever: "Really?"

Kakashi rolls her eyes. " Yes. "

"Oh." A pause, heart-stopping, because: *was that a good 'oh' or not?* Drops of blood fall onto the ground, her nails not having let go of the flesh in her thigh.

And, then, Obito, kind of— *blushes* . "And, when we bathed...?"

Kakashi blushes. Wishes the earth would open up and swallow her whole. *Mortified* doesn't even begin to describe what she's feeling right now. She's sure they can see her blush even with her mask on, since it feels like her entire face is on fire.

Rin just gapes, blindsided by Obito's train of thought.

"And, the times we shared tent...?"

And, *shit*. Kakashi doesn't want to think about all the times she's seen Obito naked as the day he was born, not *now* . She doesn't want to think about the scars she's sure no one else has seen, about the moles she wouldn't have known about otherwise.

(Those thoughts chase after her enough in the privacy of her home.)

When she sneaks a glance, Obito is bright red, almost leaving Kushina-nee-san's hair to shame. "And," he swallows, nervously catching her eyes. "That, um, that time at my house...?"

It would be great , Kakashi finds herself thinking, *if lighting came from the heavens to strike me down* . Because, what they've dubbed as *the incident* , has yet to leave her mind, and it's *embarrassing* , the way her stomach tightens at the memory, the way she has to *stop* her body from reacting, when it shouldn't be reacting in the first place.

Catching him masturbate had been an *incident* , and she's been caught between *want* and *shame* ever since. It's not like Obito had wanted her to see it, after all.

The whole situation makes Kakashi feel awkward, and for once, her body language may be betraying her and revealing what she's feeling.

"I. Yes. Yeah. All of those." She swallows, sweat running cold. "Sorry."

Obito's silent for a few seconds. Her nails tear up part of her thigh. More blood drips from the wound, and Kakashi, for a moment, is back to the first time she noticed herself bleed, like the girl from the park was doing.

"I—okay," he says, blush subsiding, even if not completely. "I mean. You're—" he pauses, to find the words or to rearrange them in his head, she doesn't know. "You're still our friend, right?"

Kakashi could *sag* with how hard the relief hits her. She *doesn't* , because she's a *shinobi* , but her shoulders drop and her hands lose all their strength, suddenly cramped. She can't help her smile, she really can't.

"I am," she affirms, breathing for what feels like the first time since the conversation started.

Obito grins at her, unrepentant of the acrobatics he's making her heart perform. She can't even deny the depth of her feelings anymore. Truly, it's a tragedy, the way she already knows Minato-sensei is going to be sending her smug glances all week.

Rin smiles at her, too, flushed cheeks and brimming with happiness. "Thank you for telling us, Kakashi. Now, how about we go eat out to celebrate?" she suggests, clapping her hands together.

They both look at her with such hope in their eyes, it's endearing. "No. We still have two hours of training left."

Their groans are music to her ears. As she stands up and starts walking towards the centre of the training ground, she hears them follow her, silent cat-walk and all, grumbling about her tyranny.

She looks up to the sky, feels her thigh sting, and focuses her mind back onto training.

She's glad to have chosen *now* , instead of *never* .

(Later, on the way home, Rin will come up to her and say: "I'm glad you trusted us.")

(It's a whisper. She hadn't intended for neither of them to hear it. But they do. "I'm glad, too." Their smiles remain engraved in her mind for the rest of her life.)

(Heart full, the part of her that's more wolf than human, purrs: *Of course I did. You're mine, after all. Part of my pack.*)

(And— *ah*. There's no denying it now, is there?)

(She loves them, doesn't she?)

where news are announced

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter VIII

Where News Are Announced

Months later, she has passed the awkward phase of "my best friend's a girl" with Obito and the "my other best friend's now my shopping buddy" with Rin. It's good, to have her best friends back. Not that seeing Obito blush wasn't amusing, but it was only for a while. And she's glad that Rin has finally understood that she's *not* thrilled by shopping. Really.

But, all in all, she's just happy to have them back.

(Like, really. Obito's seventeen. A shinobi. He should know better than blushing when they're sharing a tent in the middle of a mission. But, well, he's *Obito* .)

It's spring when Minato-sensei —who's not their sensei anymore, because he's the Hokage, and they're all Jōnin and thank Goodness still on the same team, though they go to missions with other ninjas too— calls them and invites them to supper. It's not *that* strange, but

they haven't seen nor Minato-sensei nor Kushina too much in the last five months, so it's okay if they're a little excited about it.

She has let her hair long since after coming out to her teammates, and now's at her shoulder length — and damn if she's not proud of it. But Minato-sensei and Kushina haven't seen it yet, so she thinks that it'd be a good surprise.

(And it *is* , but theirs is much bigger than hers.)

When they arrive at their sensei's home, she notices Rin wearing a cute pink dress. It's not her style, she knows, but maybe—someday, she will wear something a little more girlish. And it's a maybe, not because she's not sure, but because right now she's fifteen and she's kind of confused because she has never wanted skirts nor makeup, and suddenly she wants to *try* , to let herself see what she would look like with them. She sighs, a little stressed because it's difficult being a teenager with hormones and new sensations and feelings and — yeah, it's kind of a mess.

Obito, though, looks handsome. Perfect. Well, not really, because he's not perfect, but he's not wearing his ninja attire as usual, instead, he's wearing this shirt who does wonders and those trousers who Kakashi thinks would look a lot better in her bedroom's floor, dropped by Obito himself while they're in her bed, kissing and —

Yeah, being a teenager is a mess.

She's just wearing her mask, a shirt, and her favourite pants, which are grey. Nothing from the usual.

She knocks when she has calmed down a little.

"Minato-sensei, we're here!" Rin shouts.

The moment Minato opens the door — he's smiling happily. It feels like he's the sun itself —and maybe that's the adoration talking, but

the three of them had seen Minato at his worst and *damn* , because they're already breathing the positivity that radiates from him— and they can't wait to hear what has him so excited.

It's once they're inside the house and they see Kushina that Rin gasps, Obito is left dumbfounded and Kakashi feels her heart melt.

"Surprise!" she says, with a big smile. "We're having a baby!"

Kakashi is going to have a little brother.

Oh God, she's going to have a little brother .

(Because, yeah, this man who has blond hair and blue eyes and smells like spring breeze is her father —and Sakumo will always have a part of her heart, but Minato has his, too—.)

And she couldn't be happier.

(Later, when Minato and Kushina notice the change in her hair, and Rin and Obito are gone, she smiles. "Do you think Tsunade would be up to a sex-changing operation?")

(And she's not exactly shy, but there are a blush and a little smile hidden by her mask.)

(Kushina smiles.)

(Minato cries.)

("Our baby is going to have a big sister, Mina-chan!")

("They would have had one even if she didn't want to change her sex, Kushina.")

("Well, yeah, but now they won't be confused-ttebane!")

(For some reason, she can't stop thinking about a blond, with blue eyes and foxy smiles, baby brother that calls her "nee-chan".)

(Maybe it will all be okay, wrong body and all.)

where there's the fall

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter IX

Where There's The Fall

Kakashi can't believe it, because *today's the day* . Kushina's going on labour. She's nervous, probably sweating, and Obito is as nervous as her. Rin will be helping Biwako, the Sandaime's wife, and for Goodness sake *Kushina's going on labour* .

Yes. Yes, she is panicking.

She's sixteen, and this is the first time she's assisting something like this, and this is *Kushina* , so.

She has all the rights to do it.

(Minato has them, too.)

They're already on location, and Rin, Biwako and another medic-nin are there, helping, while she and Obito —and the Yondaime's Guard, which includes Genma, Raidou, and some other guy she doesn't know nor has she bothered with learning his name— guard the

entrance. Obito tries, and tries again, to make conversation. Not that she blames him, because the tension is high and if there's something Obito can't take, is exactly that.

(But *hell* , because she's tapping with her feet the floor *again* .)

(She. Has. The. Rights.)

They hear Biwako and Rin telling Kushina to push, push more *he's almost there* , and trembling inwardly, they hear again Kushina scream. Obito shudders, and for more than Kakashi has daydreamed a few times of silver-haired kids that have the Sharingan, she doesn't really want to go through that —because Kushina is *screaming* , and Kakashi thinks this is the first time she has heard her do so—.

Then they hear a baby's cry, and to be honest it makes Kakashi's heart go faster than in any situation before —except maybe when she's having, you know, *moments* with Obito, which normally include just hanging out or touching in some kind of friendly way, or what she interprets as friendly, because really, she's emotionally stunned, a social inept that can't read signals from a mile away; *Obito's head over heels why can't she see it* ; and Rin sighs— and she can't stop thinking, *can't literally stop thinking* , about a boy with blond hair that looks up to her because she's his big sister.

(Her mind is one of a genius. She can't stop it. Nor she wants it, right now.)

(Not even a second later, she and Obito enter the room, and it's hard not to cry, not to stare in wonder at the little body that's currently being washed by the Sandaime's wife.)

(*She has a little brother.*)

Obviously, as it will be proven countless times in the future, nothing comes easily while dealing with one Uzumaki Naruto, and in less than ten seconds, an intruder is holding him and threatening them.

Kakashi freezes, and it's not until Minato runs away with Naruto that she reacts. At the same time as Obito, they attack the intruder.

(There's a Sharingan. A Sharingan. A *Sharing* —)

(*Where are the others?*)

They're holding their own, that's right, but the guy is *good* . He's fast and strong and has his eye shifting, with weird patterns in it— it almost seems like an evolved Sharingan.

("Let's dance." she hears him say.)

Then they're fighting, and cuts bleed all across her skin and maybe she won't be leaving alive, but she sure as hell wants to at least cause him injuries. *Major* injuries. Rin is with Kushina, Minato and little Naruto. Biwako is already dead. Maybe she'll be the next.

Obito is by her side, and it doesn't really explain the rush of adrenaline, but she loves fighting along with him. Because their attacks are coordinated, they act as one, and after what seems a lifetime, they wound their enemy for the first time.

(It terrifies her a little, to think that not even two Jōnins can prove to be a challenge to the guy.)

He doesn't rage at the sight of his own blood, and then *regenerates himself* . Kakashi is officially freaked out.

(Not that she shows it.)

The speed improves in a nanosecond and before she can move, Obito is losing blood at an alarming rate. He's almost been *cut by half* .

Kakashi *trembles* .

(Kakashi's crying.)

Minato then reappears, but it's too late because in her distraction Kushina's been taken and Rin's not strong enough to battle alone *what the hell was she thinking* —

But Minato's hand is on her shoulder and as he whispers goodbye he calms her, and lets her stay.

(And she knows this because she's still there when Minato's not.)

So she sits beside Obito and holds his hand.

Obito's smiling at her, and Kakashi cannot do anything but try to forgive herself because she should be fighting, not holding his hand, not trying to capture with her eyes every little detail because this can be the last chance to do it.

"My— right," Obito murmurs. "Right eye. Take it. I won't— Won't make it." and then he coughs *blood* .

Once the words register themselves in her brain, she shakes her head. Because—

No.

This can't be—

This can't be happening.

She shakes her head, because—

Because—

Because Obito can't be dying.

Obito can't—

"Take it. A few days—" he smiles softly, and: "—late, but—"

Kakashi can't stop the tears.

No.

Nonononononononono *nono* —

"Happy birthday, 'Kashi."

(Then, his right eye is in her body and hers is no longer damaged.)

(She has two eyes that *work* .)

(She doesn't want them if the price is Obito's life.)

He smiles for what it seems like the last time, and though it's just a whisper, she can hear it.

His last words are for her ears only, maybe not even that, and it breaks everything Kakashi is.

She doesn't register Rin shaking her.

She doesn't register *anything* .

Kakashi's crying and she doesn't even bother hiding it.

She *screams* .

(Rin's hugging her, but it's not like she notices it, just like she hasn't noticed the Kyuubi, just like she hasn't noticed that the scent of Death is filling the air.)

(Obito's last breath is in her mind.)

(*If only she had been faster.*)

Kakashi doesn't leave the state of numbness, and it's only after Rin starts healing Obito that she reacts.

Kakashi sees the Kyuubi.

And with a nod to Rin, because this might not be Obito's last day in the land of living —because Rin's the best medic-nin in Konoha, even at 18, because Rin's the best they have and Rin's always been the best if it concerns her team—, she leaves.

(*Sensei* needs her right now.)

(Her *Hokage* needs her right now.)

(And she moves, even if it breaks her even more to do so.)

(Because Kakashi's a shinobi.)

(Has always been.)

But Kakashi arrives and the image of Death will always be recorded in her brain, more now that she has a Sharingan in the open.

(Kakashi arrives and there's little Naruto in what seems to be a Ritual Altar and the Kyuubi has Kushina's chains restraining him and Minato's marked by a seal she *doesn't understand* —)

It's thanks to the Sharingan that she sees Kushina and Minato move before they actually do.

It's thanks to Obito's Sharingan that she can predict the trajectory of Kyuubi's claw.

It's thanks to Obito that she moves fast enough to catch Kushina in time.

(She isn't fast enough to catch Minato.)

Tears fall one more time — Minato's body is pierced by the Kyuubi.

(Minato's blood is everywhere.)

(The scent is horrifying, and Kakashi has the feeling that she wouldn't forget this moment even if she didn't have the Sharingan.)

"I won't—" he begins. "—see you grow, Naruto. Try to listen to your mother, she knows what's the best for you. Be good, and show your love because god knows everyone in this family needs it." he chuckles. "Kushina will take care of you, so don't worry. Kakashi will help, and Rin too. Maybe you won't meet your big brother, so I'll tell you his name: Obito. Smile, and—"

Kakashi's fighting with Kushina, because as much as she wants to go there and somehow help her *father* to survive —she had failed one, and now she's failed the second, and she doesn't think she'll ever see anyone in that light again—, she needs Kushina alive. *Naruto* needs Kushina alive.

(Because Kakashi alone won't suffice because she's messed up, and Rin's always working at the hospital.)

(Kakashi prefers not to think about Obito right now.)

"I love you."

Minato's last words make echo through the valley, and Kakashi can't do it anymore.

Kakashi screams again, and cries and cries and *cries* .

(Why are their last words the same? It isn't *fair* .)

Then the Kyuubi is sealed.

(The Kyuubi is sealed and Minato's body falls.)

(Kushina's chains breaks.)

(And Kakashi faints.)

where ashes begin to dim

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter X

Where Ashes Begin To Dim

It's been a year and a half, and Kakashi's eighteen.

She—

She hasn't cared for a year and a half, about that.

(Because she's eighteen and Obito's in a coma. Because she's eighteen and Kushina can't walk. Because she's eighteen and Naruto is one of the only constants she has but *she doesn't know how to take care of a baby* and it's really, really scary, to do so. Because she's eighteen and she's so lucky that Rin's *alive and well* that for the firsts months after the Kyuubi attack she cries every time she sees her.)

(Because she's eighteen and Minato-sensei's *dead* .)

(Because her *father* is dead.)

(Because she's eighteen but she was seventeen and lost a father and a best-friend-not-quite-turned-lover, because she was seventeen and sleeping in the same bed as her pack seven nights a week because without them she couldn't even close her eyes, because she was seventeen and almost suicidal when she first accepted Gai's attempt to make a friend out of her and since then it's all a little better but still hard.)

(Because she's eighteen and she doesn't really care.)

(*She's only survived because of Obito's Sharingan.*)

(*There aren't mirrors inside her apartment.*)

(*It hurts* .)

She has been— lucky, you could say, despite all of it. Rin's almost unscattered —she has this big scar all across her face, but she's whole and absolutely *alive* , which matters her the most—, and Gai is her friend, and her pack are wonderful hunter dogs who cuddle with her at night, and Kushina might not walk but maybe she will — and *hell* if that isn't wonderful news—, and she has *Naruto* .

Naruto, who is her little brother and smiles and hurts to watch because *Minato-sensei* , but he's her little brother and a ray of sunshine —who has a mother at the hospital, a dead father, a dysfunctional big sister, a big brother in a coma and another big sister working to death because the 10th of October was truly a dark day—.

Naruto, who is known as the Jinchuuriki because of some idiot nurse who was terrified of a baby.

(*What the hell is that piece of trash doing in a hospital for ninja, then?*)

Naruto, who is currently in her arms because of the daily visit to Kushina's hospital room.

(*Soon* , she repeats to herself, *soon* .)

(Kushina will get away from the hospital in less than two months.)

"Good morning, Kushina-nee-san." she greets when she opens the door. "How do you feel today?"

She can practically see the pout on the woman's face when she answers. "I'm certainly good enough to go out-ttebane!" and then she grins. "Now, let me see my baby!"

Kakashi smiles —for what can she do— and nods. "He's been a good pup."

Kushina laughs at the terminology, but thinks that it's a little sad, that Kakashi can only relate to dogs' way of viewing family. "He's been a good boy, then-ttebane."

(Kushina proceeded to cuddle with her son. Kakashi knows how much it hurts her not to be with him twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year, and every year of his life until he's old enough to take care of himself. But even Kakashi doesn't know how deep her inner turmoils are, because even in Minato's death, even crying and after having a Bijuu extracted from her body, Kushina stayed strong.)

(*Mother is so strong* , she thinks to herself.)

Without any warning, the door opens. Rin's there, smiling and with a wheelchair in hand.

"Good morning, Kushina-nee-san, Kakashi-chan, Naru-chan." she says while giving them pecks at their cheeks. "Well, how about we go outside for a while?"

(Kakashi has always marvelled at Rin. Always kind, always smiling.)

(She still remembers all the nights the two of them cried together.)

Naruto giggles, and for all that Kakashi is downright depressed since what seems like forever, she smiles.

Kakashi's eighteen, and Kushina will be soon out of the hospital.

Kakashi's eighteen and she can sleep without her pack's help more than thrice a week.

Kakashi's eighteen and Gai distracts her enough to keep going.

Kakashi's eighteen and depressed but not suicidal.

(Kakashi's eighteen and her body is more masculine than ever, but there are other matters she has to attend that have more importance right now.)

(Like the fact that most of her pack is alive. The human pack, that is. The dog one is whole. *Thank god .*)

(Kakashi's eighteen and Obito's not there, but she has faith.)

(Obito's always been stubborn.)

It's been a year and a half since that day, and Kakashi doesn't exactly know what the future will bring, but laughing with Rin and Kushina and Naruto is great.

When Gai crashes to greet them and challenges her, she laughs. Well, technically, Gai challenges *him* , but she swears — one day, he will know, too.

Maybe when her depression is lifted.

(She thinks of Obito and blushing faces and knows that it won't be the same, because he's not Obito and never will be, but he's her friend and in the way of being her best friend, so it might be okay, to tell him.)

(She wishes for Obito to wake up, just like she always does.)

(Now that she thinks about it, she's been arriving late at the meetings, too.)

(Though maybe that's because she's been visiting Obito way too much.)

(Once Obito opens his eye—in singular because now she has one of his—, she will *kiss him*. And he will *feel* her tongue in his throat if that's what's necessary for him to stay.)

(*Hmpf.*)

where there's no light

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XI

Where There's No Light

It's difficult to describe the way Obito's feeling.

Obito's flying, drunk on darkness.

He's floating in a sea of obscurity and he thinks he may be getting addicted to it.

He remembers feeling like this when he was younger, with no worries more than arriving late and without death in his back.

When Obito thinks back to his early academy days, he thinks of her.

Her who was kind and had always a smile on her face.

Her who was his only friend, her who always had words to make him feel better.

Her whose name was Rin and who had held his heart for years.

But it's not about her anymore.

(He realized this at sixteen.)

Because he'd been put on a team with an arrogant prat and the girl of his dreams and the most awesome teacher *ever* .

He was twelve and dreamed about being Hokage, and was loud — so very loud, *too* loud sometimes, but it was *so lonely* without something filling that void called silence—, and had fought the brat two years younger than him but also *so much better* than him that it was almost suffocating, to fight with him. Or, what he believed to be a *him* , either way.

It wasn't until he was fourteen, somewhen before *that mission* , that he started liking Kakashi. It wasn't obvious, not like it had been with Rin, so he hadn't put much thought into it.

Then they've been friends —because if someone had lost an eye for him, then he couldn't be that bad, right?— and then his grandma had died. His grandma had died and he was so lost without her, so *empty* .

So he'd gone to Kakashi's home and he'd cried. He'd cried and talked and screamed, had fallen asleep in Kakashi's arms and their relationship had done another step. And he realized, oh, *he realized*.

I like Kakashi , was what had gone through his head once his thoughts have organised themselves and he'd stopped grieving.

The realization had been shocking.

Then he proceeded to, at sixteen, be a pining teen.

Of course, Rin noticed.

(She chuckled and smiled and *god* , Obito loved that smile. So he smiled too and she hugged him, kissed him on the cheek and said: "*I'm so glad, Obito.*")

(Rin was his sister from another mother and nothing could change that.)

At seventeen, Kakashi had come out to them. So, Kakashi was a girl. And it had been so confusing because he didn't care, was still head over heels for her, had taken it on a stroll and he had been perfectly okay with it.

So he hadn't cared. Not really.

But—

But it was still embarrassing that *a girl* had caught him like— like *that* .

Because, yeah, it had been embarrassing beyond everything he had known when Kakashi had caught him, but those— those type of things weren't to be seen by girls!

(His grandma had drilled into his head that he had to be a gentleman with girls, forever and always.)

(And Kakashi at that time had been a boy, a boy he liked but still a boy.)

(Well, a girl, but he *hadn't known that* .)

And from then on—

Well.

He can admit, now— in this state of peacefulness, that he'd done, things, he can't say he regrets, but absolutely has no intentions of letting anyone know.

Like the fact that he'd kissed Kakashi when she was sleeping one night in their tent.

Or like the fact that he'd checked Kakashi out when they'd been in the bathrooms.

Or the fact that he'd hugged and cuddled with Kakashi when she was asleep.

He—

He just likes cuddles, okay.

So, anyway, Obito can honestly say that he loves her.

Her whose smiles were so rare but so beautiful at the same time.

Her who fought him in every step they made but also was so incredibly ready to help him whenever he needed it.

Her who was one of the most efficient ninjas in their whole village.

Her whose gender differed from her biological sex.

Her whose name was Kakashi.

(Her who he would follow until the end of the line.)

In his darkness, Obito remembers little of what he'd been doing before it. And although he remembers Kushina's pregnancy, Minato's nerves and Kakashi's breaks down —she was going to be a big sister, you know—, he can't remember why he's here and not there.

He wants to see them, he really does, but—

Maybe he'll wait a little.

(Because he's in peace and so full of bliss, so much like completely calm with the universe—)

(He can't abandon this, not when he'd been through war and had been dealing with PTSD.)

But—

(His eye. His eye. Hiseyehiseye *hiseye* —)

But—

(Kakashi. Kakashi. KakashiKakashiKakashi *Kakashi* —)

And—

(Hurt. Hurt. Hurthurthurthurthurt *hurt* —)

So—

(With a gasp, Obito wakes up.)

where lips are locked

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XII

Where Lips Are Locked And Eyes Not Closed

There's no warning. Kakashi's nineteen, and it's been three long years since *that day*. Kakashi's nineteen and completely unprepared, absolutely horrified by it — and by that she means that she's afraid, afraid like she's been only a few times in her life, so few that she can count them in one hand.

The thing is—

Is—

Obito's awake.

And she's crying, trembling, fucking *terrified* —

Obito is—

Obito is awake.

(Relief runs through her like a wave of shock, and it makes her knees so weak she stumbles and falls to the ground, with tears falling and completely unashamed of it, because for all that she's a shinobi, she's human, too.)

When she returns to her senses, she *runs* .

(She does remember to do it through the roofs, though. No need to scare the population of Konoha, even if she doesn't give a shit about them.)

She runs and runs and runs and—

She comes to a halt when she's a jump away from Obito's window on the hospital.

He's—

Obito is—

Oh god, *oh god* .

She jumps and opens the window and—

"You idiot!"

And if her voice sounds strangled, if she chokes between tears, it doesn't matter, because Obito doesn't even have time to react before Kakashi's on top of him, hugging and crying and murmuring things not unlike the first words she has said to him since he's awake.

To his surprise, Kakashi lowers her mask.

"You—" and then she *kisses* him, "Absolute—" and *again* , "Big—" and *again* , "Idiot!" and *again* .

(Obito doesn't reject them, because he's wanted them for a long time, but is still a little bit confused. More than a little bit. But either

way, it's not like he can think that much because *Kakashi's lips are on his* —)

Their kiss intensifies and Kakashi can't be more grateful that he's responding, because that means he's awake, that means he's *alive* , and *hell* . She's wanted that for three agonizing years. And it *burns* , but— somehow, it's a good type of burn.

They part with gasps, trying to catch their breaths.

"I love you."

The words are rushed, Kakashi's still panting, but her eyes haven't wavered.

"I love you, loveyouloveyou *loveyoulov* —"

Obito pushes her to another kiss, this one with tongue, and with teeth clashes because they're desperate for each other —because Obito has only wakened up for Kakashi, and Kakashi's been waiting for a long time just to see his eyes-now-eye again—.

Kakashi's tears haven't stopped, not since she'd received the news from the hawk from Rin.

Kakashi doesn't know how much time they'd been kissing, but her lips are swollen as much as Obito's, and their grip on each other is still strong.

(And maybe it's time to stop because Obito's just awakened from a coma, and he's weak, right now. But she doesn't want to, and neither does Obito.)

("I—" Obito says between kisses, "Love you—Mph—" and then continues, with a soft smile, "Too.")

(Then Kakashi smiles.)

("I know.")

(Then they proceed to kiss again.)

They're just cuddling, and Kakashi's trying to reassure herself that yes , this is real and not a dream.

And, if only for this once, she tries to believe.

They don't even hear the door opening, revealing Rin along with Kushina and Naruto. "Well, it seems that Kakashi-chan arrived earlier than us, Nee-san, Naru-chan." And Rin hides her delicate laugh behind her hand, but it doesn't work because there's a smile on her face big enough to brighten the entire planet.

"It seems so-ttebane." Kushina says, already with a big smile on her face. She laughs when Kakashi and Obito let out little yelps because they hadn't noticed their presence and— anyways. "Come on, let's greet 'em. Look, Naru-chan, Kashi-nee-chan and Obito-nii-chan are awake."

(And Kakashi's heart breaks a little and heals a little too, because Naruto's meeting with Obito for the first time, and they're so much alike, personality-wise, that she can't help but think that he's going to steal her little brother.)

(She'll share, though.)

(Because he's his big brother, too.)

Obito looks surprised, but not too much —he's already been given the "you've just woken up from a coma" talk, and apparently, there's one— and gives the two women and the child a gentle smile. "Hey there, Naru-chan."

"'Ello," the blond says, uncertain. "Obi—Bi—Ob—"

Kakashi smiles, gentle and caring and loving, and says: "It's Obito, Naru-chan. O-Bi-To."

"O-Bi—" he pauses. "Bi—To." and then he smiles, proud. "To!"

(And Obito laughs — the sound makes the three women heart's clench, but it's okay, because this is Obito and it's a sound they thought they would never hear again.)

"You really are cute, aren't you, Naru-chan?"

They laugh at his teasing tone, but Naruto doesn't quite catch it — so he smiles, and laughs with the rest of his family.

Two hours later they're kicked out by the other staff, but promise to return tomorrow.

(Kakashi leaves with a kiss on his lips and a whispered "I love you" that doesn't go unheard.)

(Kakashi then lifts her mask again and walks away, lighter than ever before and with a smile that reaches her eyes.)

(She's so happy, so utterly *happy* .)

(His lips still taste like sweets.)

Author's Note;

Okay, first of all, you are all amazing and I appreciate the support you've given me. Love ya. And as I usually don't leave notes at the end, sorry for that by the way, I'll just say that you are all amazing. I'll try to leave more notes and all that jazz. Anyways, I don't think I'll be posting much until all my exams are finished, so sorry for that. I hope you've liked the chapter —and the story—, because I give my best.

And, well, that was it. I think. My brain's bit dead by now, because it's like eleven pm and my god I haven't slept in days, but I just had to write this chapter. By the 16th of June my exams will be finished —if I pass them all— and then I'm going to write like a madman, I just know it.

Love y'all,
—bluebxrry.

where dark roots lurk

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XIII

Where Dark Roots Lurk

Kakashi is nineteen and for the first time in three years, she's happy. Completely and fully happy. With smiles and all.

(Obito may or may not be the cause. Kushina walking may or may not contribute. Rin having more time may or may not be part of it. Naruto's smile has a lot to do with it, either way.)

Kakashi's ANBU, has been one since that 10th of October. It has nothing to do with protecting the village and all with protecting her heart. Because Kakashi lost a father and *Obito* , almost Kushina and Rin, too. And she didn't cope with it.

(Didn't know how.)

In her time in ANBU, she makes ANBU Captain in record time and trusts her squad with everything she is — inside the missions, that is.

(Because they still don't know how embarrassing is that she has to change in the same room as them, how she hates her body everytime she gets to see it, how she can't bring herself to even *look* at it some days.)

In her time in ANBU, Hound —Kakashi— is revered, has completed missions deemed suicidal and has led her squad through impossible after impossible. She has returned home with all her squad alive time after time and has the record on least casualties on missions *ever* .

In her time in ANBU, Danzo approaches her and makes her see the ugliest part of Konoha. ROOT is darkness, but she knows — on her own, she won't be able to do anything. So she turns to her Hokage, tells everything to him and accepts Danzo's offer. She infiltrates. She goes to the deepest part of Konoha and digs into its roots.

(And she is loyal to Konoha, but this isn't it.)

(It breaks her further, to know her home has a side so dark most of them can't see it.)

Investigating, she comes to find a specific file.

It contains Naruto's information.

(She loses it.)

(Then she researches more and more and more and her sanity begins to slip through her fingers with every word she reads.)

(How Danzo doesn't notice a thing she doesn't know, but maybe it has to do with the fact that the Sandaime is making his life much more difficult since she first reported his approaching.)

In her time in ANBU, Kakashi reunites her squad and goes to the Hokage just to show him the files she's found. And so she is given a mission with a face full of regrets and eyes lingering with heaviness.

("*Wipe them out.*")

(She gladly does.)

(Naruto is then three years old and he is going to be safe soon — she ends the threat in less than three months.)

(Though technically, she and a bunch of ANBU do it.)

Kakashi is nineteen and ANBU Captain when raiding one of Danzo's bases, she finds a little boy who can use *Mokuton* and needs her protection.

(*Kakashi-senpai* , he calls her. And so they bond.)

Kakashi is nineteen when Obito wakes up and she feels happy again. She doesn't quit ANBU, for it is a part of her life already.

(Also she loves Genma and Raidou and Tenzo and Kara and Iwaza — loves Turtle and Lion and Tenzo and Lizard and Owl.)

Shortly after, she deals with the —how Naras would say, *troublesome* — aftermath of Danzo's death. She —with many others — starts countering the brain-washing of Ne's and returns some kids to their homes, safe and not sound but at least safe.

And then—

Then she starts living again.

(With Obito's smile —even though he's not out of the hospital yet— and Kushina at her home with Naruto —finally together, just as they should have been from the start—, with Rin's loving gazes and Gai's challenges and *Icha Icha* , with her ANBU Squad and her dogs by her side.)

Kakashi smiles once she and Obito talk and decide that he would be moving to her apartment with her once he's free to go and leave the hospital's bed.

(Kakashi blushes once they talk about their relationship and Obito's tender eye is fixed on her.)

(She has a boyfriend and Kushina's *so loud* when she congratulates them.)

(She loves her anyway.)

(She's also the happiest she's been in years, and it makes her heart want to explode every time she sees her loved ones together and smiling.)

(*She's going to protect this .*)

where the early bird catches the worm

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XIV

Where The Early Bird Catches The Worm

Kakashi's nineteen, has defeated Danzo along with the ANBU, has a big sister and a little brother, and is absolutely terrified because she doesn't know what the hell she's going to do with the mess that's hers and Obito's relationship.

(Maybe it's not *such* a mess. Maybe it's her, the mess.)

It's been fantastic so far, but Kakashi and Obito—

Kakashi and Obito are best friends, have been for the last seven years.

And then they kissed.

Kissed as, made out in a hospital bed, ate each other's mouth and tried to do the same with their tongues.

(God, they— they *kissed* .)

And now he's her *boyfriend* .

Which is—

Is—

Is more than she could ever hope for, but at the same time it's strange, because she's been pining after him for so long that finally kissing his lips is like she's living on a dream.

(She's also kind of freaked out, because she *doesn't want to screw this up* .)

(So maybe it's not the relationship that's a mess, but her and her insecurities and all that tries to bring her down at night.)

Obito's to be released from the hospital in a few hours and Kakashi doesn't know what to do because the Hokage sent her on a mission just two weeks after she and Obito *talked* .

(*Fuck him* , wanted to say Kakashi.)

(But Kakashi is a shinobi and the Hokage's word is law, the Hokage's word is what matters the most.)

(*"You're the only one I can count on for this, Kakashi. I'm sorry."*)

(The Third is tired.)

(Kakashi is, too.)

When Kakashi returns to Konoha —having completed the mission days before what was accorded, because Obito's going home and if that's not a good motivation she doesn't know what is— it's four a.m., and she doesn't expect anyone to be waiting at the gates for her.

(Rin needs her sleep the most, Kushina's walking but still has difficulties and she's with Naruto, *should* be with Naruto.)

(Gai is away on a mission and her ANBU team wouldn't come, they know not to.)

(And Obito is still in the hospital.)

(*Probably.*)

She pauses when she sees a figure at the gates.

And wonders.

Because this was a solo mission.

Because there shouldn't be anyone there with the exception of the guards.

Because there *is* .

And Kakashi moves forward.

(She almost *runs* , having already recognized the silhouette.)

"What are you doing here?" she asks.

And then he smiles, completely unremorseful. "Can't I see my girlfriend after three weeks of being alone, in a hospital bed, abandoned and sad?"

And Kakashi—

Kakashi laughs.

"Yeah."

(Then she lowers her mask, and kisses him.)

Obito hums in the kiss, passing his hands through her long hair — which is already long enough to cover her entire spine— and runs his tongue through her lip in a plea to deepen the kiss.

Of course, Kakashi complies.

(The guards at the gate just ignore what's happening right in front of them. Has to be a hallucination, this. Because there's *no way* that *Hellhound* , that *Kakashi of the Sharingan* is actually making out like some horny teenager at the gates of Konoha with a man they haven't seen in years.)

(*Ha ha* , that's what happens when you live off caffeine and have guard duty at four in the morning, one whispers to the other.)

"It's really early," Kakashi whispers. "And you should be at the hospital."

And Obito smiles again. "Well, I really missed you, so..."

Kakashi sighs —and just like that Obito's pardoned— and softly smiles.

They're going home, now.

(They're going home together for the first time in a really long time.)

(There are going to be struggles, Kakashi knows that. She doesn't like her body, hates it in fact, and having a sexual relationship with Obito is going to be complicated in that part. But she also loves him, and maybe *that's* what matters the most.)

(As they smile shyly at each other on the sofa, because this is a new dynamic for them, Kakashi thinks it was all worth it.)

Author's Note;

First of all, thanks to "Guest", who's been correcting my mistakes, I'll rectify them as fast as I can —but probably not today, I'm still on my vacation—, like I literally love you right now because I know my English ain't the best, and well, I appreciate it. Thanks again, lovely!

Thanks, obviously, to all the others who like the fanfic. And for all of you to know, I got accepted into the college I wanted! I'm like, vomiting rainbows or something.

Love y'all,

—bluebxrry.

where there's a way to happiness

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XV

Where There's A Way To Happiness

Inside Kakashi's apartment, with her mission cleared and her report to the Hokage delivered —as it should be—, Kakashi and Obito stand at less than a meter from each other, staring into the other's eyes and in silence.

"Can I—" starts the brunette in nothing more than a whisper, caressing one of her cheeks. "Can I kiss you, Kakashi?"

And what more can she do other than lower her mask and nod, a small smile in her face as she does so, really?

(And how dare he be so sweet, it's turning her *soft* .)

Inside Kakashi's apartment, with the dawn on them and the singing of the birds, Kakashi and Obito stand kissing each other. Her hands on his waist, his wrapped around her neck.

When his tongue pleads for permission, she gives it. And when they stop to breathe—but what wouldn't Kakashi give to lose the necessity right now—his hands unwrap and begin to tangle with her hair, she sighs pleurably — she hasn't felt this good in *ages* .

"I love you."

It is said in a whisper, and two meters apart from the sofa on the living room, and breathless after all the kissing they've done, but truer words haven't been spoken.

"I love you *so damn much*. "

(Kakashi nearly chokes at her confession. But it's true, and she can't get over how much she loves this man.)

(She still can't believe he's awake.)

Then Obito smiles, full of joy —because even when they said those words in the hospital multiple times, every time he hears her say them his heart accelerates and happiness fills his body like nothing ever before— and with beginnings of tears in his eyes, because he's always been a sentimental fool, pulls together their foreheads and says:

"Hey," he starts, "I love you too."

Later, when they've fallen into the sofa and made out like teenagers—the guards at the gate are still waiting for another hallucination to come— they smile and cuddle.

(Because even when Kakashi has disliked physical affection since forever, she can't deny Obito anything.)

(And if Obito loves something, it's cuddles.)

(And Kakashi, Obito *definitely* loves Kakashi.)

The next day, Kakashi wakes up in Obito's arms, her head in his shoulder and her mask lowered. It's—

It's—

It's a blessing, that's what it is. She smiles softly for it and pecks his cheek.

"Good morning."

And Obito —boy he still is, even with the body of a grown-up man—, opens his eye and grins mischievously at her. "Good morning, 'Kashi."

Not a second passes before he's tickling her, and she tenses her muscles in response. Kakashi's not ticklish, not at all.

(Thank god for ninja training, or she would have lost a lot more than her reputation over the years.)

(She's *not* ticklish, okay?)

(Not at all.)

(Obito is, though. And his laughter is a gift she won't ever stop thanking for.)

Days pass and there's no one that can convince Kakashi to stop her smile from happening. Things aren't perfect, of course. Obito and Kakashi fight and Rin has to live with Naruto and Kushina because unlike before, they don't have a babysitter for Naruto —the kind civilian still visiting, even though she had a job at her father's ramen restaurant—, and Kushina's still not at full health —nor, they think, will she ever be—, and Gai and the rest still think she's a man, and it's got Kakashi a little bit down, but all in all — things are far better than before, and Kakashi's grateful.

(Obito's still grieving for Minato, for their *sensei* , for their *Hokage* .)

(Obito's grieving for their father and Kakashi knows, she's grieving for him too. For the fact that they didn't have more time together, for the fact that Obito was in a coma while the rest of them dressed in black and cried for the one that taught them what summer breeze tasted like.)

(For the father they had and Naruto would never know.)

But it'll be okay , she thinks. *It'll be* .

And it'll be, because Naruto is smiling and Kushina is, too. Because her family is together and will overcome the sadness that sometimes makes itself home in them.

(Because for all that there are tears, Obito smiles and Rin laughs, and Kakashi is *happy* .)

(Because for once Kakashi knows that they'll be *fine* , and it overwhelms her.)

(Gai will know soon enough. Her ANBU team will know soon enough—Obito still stubborn on the matter of her being ANBU Captain, and on letting her team know—.)

(She will cut her hair a little, though. Maybe shoulder-length. It would be cute, wouldn't it?)

where bliss takes over

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2017; bluebxrry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XVI

Where Bliss Takes Over

Kakashi's twenty-three and more content than she would have ever thought. She knows, she's had her hardships — everyone who's a ninja has had them. But, to feel what she's feeling now, the calmness that wraps around her—

She knows few know the meaning of peace in a world where kids are trained to be killers and trust is reserved only for those who see behind the walls of one's home.

But in Obito's arms, seeing a six-year-old Naruto play with other children, admiring the view that is Rin and Kushina laughing while watching over the little blond devil, and knowing that finally what she thought would be a secret all her life wasn't any more, Kakashi can safely say that yes, despite all the hardships and the nightmares, despite the losses and the not-quite ones, despite being a *shinobi*, she knows what peace feels like.

(And it's wonderful and absolutely breathtaking. Even if it won't last, even if it will end someday.)

(Because it will — her world is one of violence.)

(But while it's tranquil, she will relax and enjoy what she can.)

(Like the fact that she wakes up with Obito by her side.)

On other matters, not long after Obito's awakening from the coma, she came out to her friends.

(Read, Gai and her ANBU team. Her social skills hadn't improved much in the three years the love of her life had been playing *Sleeping Beauty* .)

And while it was nerve-wracking, because *honestly* , why couldn't her friends be normal, she's still glad she did it. No one else needed to know — she was a private person, and having her friends *in the know* was —and still is— enough for her.

There have been downs along the ups, of course — like the fact that she can't get a sex-changing surgery even if Tsunade miraculously is to return to Konoha, because she's already twenty-three and the operation can't be done if the patient's over twenty. Something about the stress that being a ninja puts in the body. It felt like she was numb when she first received the news. But with her pack's —the human one— help, she accepted it. Not get over it —she would never, she didn't think she could— but she had lived all her life in a body that was hers but wasn't what it was supposed to be, and while it hurt —in a different way than all the hurts before, but not causing less pain— she kind of moved on.

(Not completely, not really. But she had made a step ahead and not looked back, because she had enough regrets drowning her at night and didn't need another.)

On another note, Naruto's going to start the academy in two years.

He's going to be a shinobi, just like the rest of his family.

It's—

Heartbreaking, to say at least. Maybe because it means that someday his smile can be wiped off —the cruelty of their reality almost impossible to ignore— or maybe because it means he's growing up and she, selfishly, doesn't want that. He is her little ray of sunshine, will always be. But he needs to make his way through the world, and she knows that.

It's just, *sad* .

(Kakashi isn't prone to melancholy, but, she thinks, this might be it.)

"What are you thinking of, 'Kashi?" a voice behind her whispers.

She smiles —by his side, how can she not— and, mood completely changed, deviously answers: "Let's go home, Obito."

(And *oh* , how glad she is that the reservations in sex have been thrown out of the window.)

(Yes , she thinks as they close their bedroom's door, *she's more than glad about it* .)

(His hands memorizing every inch of her body, her mouth in his neck, the butterfly touches of his lips in her chest—)

(—his mouth on her dick, hers on his. Slow, fast, hard, soft. Thrust upon thrust, sweat all over them and the dried sperm spread over the sheets. Tongues with the taste of heaven and fingers that resonate on her spine. Shivers from lust and eyes full of desire. Her hands down his nipples, his dick entering her ass —raw, large and so delightfully *his* —; their bodies intertwined as if it were a dance.)

(Teeth and tongues and glances and touches. Hickeys and biting marks and fingertips imprints, and making love and fucking and their

kind of sexual healing. Cries that are drawn out of pleasure and words that are melted out of love.)

(Sighs, cries, meowls, groans, moans.)

("Fuck, I love you, Kakashi." he lets out as he dives into her, fast and strong and a lot of things Kakashi can't think about now, not really. They're panting, slowly driving each other out of their minds, any kind of thought forgotten except those that begin at the other's skin and end in reciting one another's name on a pursuit of their favourite cardinal sin. "I— Fuck, I love you too, 'Tobi.")

It's wasn't long before the population caught on their relationship — they didn't hide away, even if at first were a little more reserved— and congratulations and glares behind their back came and went.

And though Kakashi rarely grins, she's tempted several times a day, now.

She's completely and utterly happy, at peace with herself, content with the life she's lived and will continue to live.

(And everything has ups and has downs, there's more pain in her soul than anyone can imagine, but there's joy inside of her and it burns every time she's reminded that for all that she's lost, she has reasons to live to the fullest.)

(She's loved for the way she is, and she loves for the way her loved ones are.)

(And for all that her fathers are missing, Kakashi feels —for the first time— like the turmoil that was her life has calmed and has left instead a peaceful weave of bliss.)

(She thanks all the gods above and falls asleep with the warmth that is Obito besides her.)

where theirs is a family of choice

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2018; soheresaberry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Chapter XVII

Where Theirs Is A Family Of Choice

Kakashi's twenty-six years old when Obito, sweet Obito, drops a bomb on her. One she doesn't know how to respond to. She loves Obito, of course she does, there's nothing in this world he could do for her to stop loving him. But—

But—

But — !

What he's saying, what he's convincing her of doing right now leaves her in *shock* . Completely, utterly shocked, that's what she is.

There's uncertainty in Obito's eyes —and obviously she notices, she would *always* notice— and he's far more nervous than everyone else might believe —except for Rin, because Rin *always* knows, somehow—.

(*Minato-sensei* would have noticed it too, would have *known* because he was omnipotent and so she firmly believed.)

(But he wasn't. Not really.)

(Kakashi still loves Minato-sensei far more than what others think is healthy. Grieves him because he was *father* and she'd already lost one of those.)

(She knows it's the same for Obito, who never knew his parents and took their sensei as an adopted one, and for Rin, whose father bolted at hearing about the pregnancy of her mother and left them behind.)

(But Minato-sensei *died* , and he left them but not really, because he would always stay in their minds and hearts and in Naruto. So they grieve, and they don't move on, but they take a step towards the future and feel him smiling from their side. Because they would never, *ever* , leave him behind.)

"Obito, did you—" she takes a moment to take a deep breath, and continues: "Did you just said we should *adopt* ?"

He's a ball of nerves, there's a faint blush on his face, his entire body language is focused on her and is jittery at best. He's supposed to be a shinobi. *Honestly* .

He is shifting his weight constantly between his legs as if he couldn't stay put. Which, okay, he's Obito, he probably has more energy than a fully charged battery.

"I—, I mean, there's— uh, a kid, not *my* kid, but *someone else's* kid, and they're, um, *unsuited* to take care of them, because, because they're not always in the village, you know? But until recently they had, um, someone who took care of the kid, but now the old man's *dead* , so they don't have anyone else. And, and they, *were* a good friend of my—, my parents, *and they kinda asked me?* " he ends with

a really high-pitched voice she hasn't heard from him since he was at least *eighteen* , and *woah* .

(Obito's adorable, she's never been able to do anything about it, he's also incredibly hot, he's also irrationally *good* , she's a puddle of goo whenever he asks her something, *why is this a question again?*)

Kakashi, though Obito's far cuter than he should have the right to be, takes a moment to breathe and *think* . "So, your parents had a friend, and this friend now has a child, but as if I suspect they work as a spy," and when she looks at the brunet for confirmation, he nods, doesn't say anything out loud but *nods* , "then they obviously can't take care of a baby. They had someone else, an old man, that took care of the kid, but he died. And they want *you* , and going by our relationship, *us* , to take care of them. Is that it?"

Her partner —lover, husband, whatever— nods again, face red and heart beating as twice as fast, and Kakashi—

Kakashi doesn't know what to do.

She's never been great with *social interaction* , how the hell is she supposed to *take care of a child* , she doesn't know. She thanked the gods for Kushina, because if she wasn't there, she didn't know how Naruto would have turned out like —with Rin being the only positive maybe-parental figure in his life, because Kakashi herself was a wreck and Obito was no better, too young at nineteen to even *think* about children, less take care of one as delicate as the Jinchuuriki—. But now, now Obito's twenty-eight and she's twenty-six.

Maybe they can make it work, after all.

(She's not making any promises, but *family* sounds nice. She knows Obito's wanted one since *forever* .)

(Maybe she's wanted one too.)

(Even if she does have one. Kushina-nee-san and Naru-chan and Rin and Obito are her family. But a *pup* on her and Obito's own. Huh.)

"And they won't want them back once this friend of your parents is back to the village?" she asks, because that's a concern. She doesn't want to get attached if that means losing the kid once the biological parent comes to them.

Obito, though, shakes his head. "No, they won't. Hase's new mission is too long. Twelve years until they come back, *minimum* . And with their partner and their father dead, they don't have anyone else. Hase said that it was better for their son to grow up loved, *like they knew would happen if we took care of him* , than waiting for his estranged parent to come back. Hase *loves* their child. They *do* , they really do. But circumstances are not great, and when they asked me—"

When he starts rambling, Kakashi puts a hand in his mouth. And because family's something she has but not completely, because Obito's telling her *I want to raise this child with you* , she nods.

Tears are threatening to fall from her eyes, and her smile's so wide she doesn't think she's ever smiled like this before, and it hurts her cheeks. She's so *goddamn happy* .

"Yes," she responds. "Yes, I'll adopt this child with you."

Obito's face is an open book, and the joy and happiness in his eyes tell her he's been waiting for this a long time.

(Kakashi gave up when she heard that she couldn't go under surgery. Now she knows Obito never gave up, and she's *thankful* , so she hugs the life out of the man she loves and lowers her mask and kisses his lips and makes love to him and shows him that she *loveslovesloves* him.)

She meets Hase's kid —he's three years old, and tiny, and a *pup* , oh *god* — a day later, and though she will be taking this to her grave, he's *adorable* . His name is Ryū, and she's besotted with him since she spared him a glance not even five seconds after entering the house he's living in.

(To. The. Grave.)

Ryū has dark brown hair, just like Obito, and dark grey eyes he's apparently inherited from the other parent who —surprise of the year — was not an Uchiha. He's a bit of a shy kid with her, but he's excitable and acts more like Naruto —a bubble of joy and endless energy— when he's around Obito.

He's going to get comfortable around her in no time, she swears.

Three days later, the adoption papers are ready, and they take Ryū home.

(It's more complicated than that. They have to get the adoption papers, the approbation of the Clan Head, of Hase, of the *Hokage* — like, *why the fuck* — and they talk to Ryū about it. He's happy to be living with Obito and seems intrigued by her. He's such an adorable *puppy* . He even has the puppy-eyes. Fucking Uchiha, ruining her reputation of being impassible to everything. He and Obito are the bane of her existence, she's sure of that.)

He cries, asks where's his *ojii-san* , and is a handful at his best moments, and though love doesn't come easily for Kakashi, at four months of living with the little rascal, she's sure she loves him.

She tells Obito first and then sits one afternoon with her —it's a little bit early to call him *son* , but it's what it feels like— and while both of them are reading a book, Ryū in her lap, and she holding him, she pauses narrating for a moment and looks at him in the eyes.

"Ryū," she calls his attention. And because she's never been good at anything but at being a shinobi —despite what her team and Naruto

and Kushina say— she says: "I love you, Ryū."

His eyes grow misty, and he wraps his tiny arms around her in an attempt to hug her, and practically buries his head in her stomach. She pats his head, not sure of what to do.

"I love you too."

(And if her heart flutters and there's a smile behind her mask, and if she's too entranced to notice Obito upon the door, smiling to himself and grinning like a madman because he's never been *happier* , then no one says anything.)

Ryū calls Naruto *nii-chan* , calls Kushina *obaa-san* , calls Rin *oba-san* , and at eight months after they first met, Ryū calls Kakashi *kaa-chan* and Obito *tou-chan* .

(Oh, how her ANBU team teases her for it. Saying she's adorable, she's a *big softie under all the crankiness* . One would think they don't have enough of Hell Training, with the way they tease her.)

(Also, they *might* be the babysitters when Rin's not available, or Kushina and Naruto are off to one of their *fuuinjutsu lessons* , god forbid an Uzumaki not learning that art. Better them than Gai, *duh* .)

(And Genma has three chunin he adopted a while back. Kotetsu, Izumo and Iruka, was it? They turned out quite well, so *at least* she can trust him with Ryū.)

(Raidou, Tenzo, Kara and Iwaza — they're absolutely *hopeless* when it comes to children. *Why* did she had the idea to trust them, again?)

(*Oh* . Yeah. Because *Gai* is the other option. Yeah, *no way in hell* .)

(And Obito's friends— Asuma, Kurenai, *Gai* , Shisui —and why is Obito friends with that *menace* , honestly—, *Anko* , yeah, no, she prefers picking Genma over all of them. The only normal one is Kurenai —and Asuma, but he's in the capital being a glorified

bodyguard for the Daimyō— and she *doesn't know her* . So, Genma it is.)

There are difficulties to come. Kakashi's sure of that. But this warmth, this happiness that doesn't slip through her fingers but *stays* , is what Kakashi lives for.

It's what Kakashi will fight for.

It's what Kakashi will protect.

(Even at the cost of her own life.)

(She wishes Sakumo and Minato were with them, but she knows, they're watching over them, wanting them to *live* .)

(Years later, when the Fourth Ninja War occurs, and Minato is resurrected he looks at them and *smiles* , bright like the sun and as resembling as it could be to his own son's smile, and they feel his chakra bask in happiness for them, tells them all how *proud* he is, tells them all how much *love* he has for them—even if that they already knew—and none of them can stop the tears. Nor do they want to.)

(Ryū and Obito and Rin and Naruto and Kushina and her ANBU and Gai are still alive after the whole ordeal, and she can't thank anyone enough. They've faced *so much* in such a short time, and the Akatsuki had brought *so much hurt* with them, Jiraiya was dead, Tsunade almost didn't survive Pain's invasion, plenty of comrades were dead and it was because some *goddess* wanted to take back *chakra* . What is their life anymore, really.)

(Even though her ANBU are all ANBU in the war because after Pain's —Nagato's— invasion Obito was made *Hokage* and she his ANBU General, so *all* ANBU respond to her command. Still, *her* ANBU will always be the team who got her through hard missions, who still calls her *Captain* instead of *General* , who are still *little shits*

even when she is the ANBU with more power and only the Hokage can overrule her.)

(And the Hokage knows she's got the heart and the mind in the right place because the Hokage is Obito. And Obito will always trust her, but if he thinks it's not right he will call her on it. And they will discuss the issue, and overcome the obstacle with Rin's help —she's the Head of the Hospital along with Tsunade— or with Shikaku's. Obito's a good Hokage, *great* even, and is that what makes people adore him.)

(Even *Tobirama* approved of Obito during the war.)

(*Oh, how she loves that man .*)

where the end takes place

THE WOUND'S STILL BLEEDING

© 2018; soheresaberry

Summary;

Kakashi is a girl, she really is, despite her wrong body and her less-than-delicate attitude.

Epilogue

Where The End Takes Place

Naruto is twelve when he graduates from the Academy and is made Genin. Iruka-sensei, who *cares* about him and is not like the other teachers—who sneered, snarled, wanted him *gone*—was hurt in the process, what with Mizuki being a traitor and Iruka-sensei defending *him* against the pale-haired Chunin.

Naruto has known about the Kyuubi since he was eight and entered at the Academy. His mom told him, and she was the one who held it before him, so she knows what she's talking about when she says he's not a monster.

(His brother and two sisters don't think he's a monster either, and he's ever so thankful for having them, even if he doesn't always show it. And two of them—Tobi-nii and Kashi-nee, the nicknames he gave them when he was like, three years old—gave him Ryū, his little brother-cousin-family, who doesn't think he's a monster either.)

He ends up in Team 7 with that stuck-up Uchiha, Sasuke —who is Itachi's little brother, the friend of Shisui who is friends with Tobi-nii—and a pretty girl whose name is Haruno Sakura. He likes her, he *really* does, but she's mean, sometimes. Especially when he's fighting with Sasuke.

(He holds the shiver when his mother looks at them and laughs, saying *oh, this is how Obito and Kakashi started, too* .)

When the instructors have all arrived —and what a shame that Rin is already a sensei, because he would have *loved* to have her as a Jōnin-sensei, no matter what her students say about her being a *devil in disguise* , his nee-chan is *awesome* , not more than his mother, but still— they stay behind when their Jōnin-sensei is *late* .

He's having a bad feeling about this.

When, seventeen minutes later, the door opens, he looks at it hoping that it won't be who he thinks is it.

Praying definitely pays off, because instead of Kashi-nee —oh, the *horror* — it's Tobi-nii who appears in the Academy class.

"Ah, sorry, sorry!" he says, sheepish as he can be. "There was an old lady, and one always has to help them, you know?"

His Jōnin-sensei is *Tobi-nii* .

Obito-sensei now, he supposes.

Still, it's *awesome* . Because even though it's not a joy to train with him —it always leaves him exhausted— it's better than having a training session with *Kashi-nee* . The *slave driver* has even *him* with chakra exhaustion and muscle aching for *days* , if not *weeks* .

No, better Tobi-nii, he's reasonable, he doesn't have Hell Training, and is generally laid back and *sociable* , a word which his nee-chan doesn't seem to know. If not for Ryū, Naruto would have serious

doubts about her being able to even *hold* a child. And anyway, that's only her son and him. The rest are, and he's quoting, '*evil pups from the gates of hell*' .

(He learns later, Obito-sensei *does* have Hell Training, all of the Team 7 do. Minato, his *father* , was the one who started the whole thing. And now is a *Team 7* thing. Which means that, *probably* , Sasuke and Sakura and he are going to have a version themselves, and he doesn't know what he fears the most, the Team Minato's version, or what his teammates, with their sadistic tendencies, will come up with.)

(Naruto successfully ignores the fact that he's a terror in the village regarding his pranks, how he cackles after them, and how much glee it provokes in him to have those villagers trembling for when's his next prank.)

They meet at the roof of the Academy, and they introduce themselves.

(Sasuke's goal is to surpass his brother, Sakura's to *marry* Sasuke —which, ew — and his is to become Hokage. *Duh* .)

(Obito, they learn, is *next in line* to be Hokage. Uh. Who knew.)

(In truth, Obito's not Hokage because he's spent years recuperating from the coma, and there's still opposition to an *Uchiha* being Hokage. And there are issues —like the whole thing with Danzo and his brainwashed minions, or the disaster with Orochimaru, or the rocky alliance with Suna— so he can't take The Hat yet. He *will* , he just has to *wait* .)

The next day — *we're doing a test to determine whether or not are you ready to be a shinobi, or in Sakura's case, a kunoichi* , Obito-sensei said, *maybe think about what you've learnt in the Academy, yeah?* — they face The Bells Test™ and *pass* . Not at first, but they pass either way.

They're Team 7 now.

And he's Naruto, but now he's Naruto and Sakura and Sasuke because they're a *team* .

And they're going to *turn the world upside down* .

Believe it.

(And they do, and it's *awesome* , and Obito is *sure* their goal is to make his hair as white as Kakashi's — *it's not white, it's silver you idiotic moron!* , yeah, *right* .)

(For her part, his partner only cackles from the distance and prays she's not ever taken away from ANBU and forced to be Jōnin-sensei in the privacy of her thoughts.)